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COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

HORNBLOWER

and the Guns of Carabobo
by C. S. FORESTER

Week ending September 28 1957

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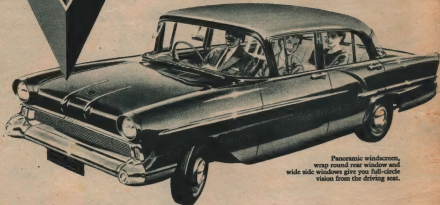


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CHANCERY 3344 SEPTEMBER 28, 1957 VOLUME 102 NUMBER 2074

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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR



David Howarth heard of an Arctic legend

At eleven o'clock on a May night last year David Howarth stepped off a plane in the Arctic—wearing a grey business suit, a white shirt, a green tie and a raincoat. "Hardly the clothes for a temperature forty-five degrees below freezing," he says, "but I had to leave England in a hurry."

Twenty-seven hours earlier, at his Kent home, he had received a phone call from Copenhagen telling him that if he wanted to visit north-east Greenland he had to be at London Airport at 7.30 the following morning. "I had no time to prepare, and I wore the raincoat because it was raining on my way to the airport."

Howarth went to the Arctic to do the research for his new book *The Sledge Patrol*, which we begin serializing on page 11. He first heard of the story three years ago, when two Danish friends told him of a legend, going the rounds in the Arctic, about a fifteen-man army which fought a German invasion. He traced members of the "army" to Denmark and then found Eske Brun, wartime governor of Greenland. He asked Brun if there was any way of reaching the scene of the battles—in an inaccessible part of north-east Greenland. Brun said that he would try to help—and Howarth later got his urgent phone call.

Howarth was trained as a scientist. "But when I came down from Cambridge in 1933 there was little call for scientists. I got a job with Baird on television research at £3 a week."

He married a Shetland girl whom he met during war service with the navy and they now have four children, aged between three months and eleven years. Despite the present-day demand for physicists and mathematicians Howarth has no regrets at having forsaken science. "I'd much rather write books," he says. He has been doing it very successfully for six years now.

LYN ARNOLD, who wrote *Portrait*, on page 18, became interested in art while searching for story material in Paris ten years ago. One day she stopped to watch an American who was painting near the Louvre. "I was so fascinated that I stayed all hour," she says. "Afterwards I found it easier to draw my notes than scribble." She took an evening class in art and made painting her hobby. About twenty of her pictures now hang in her flat.

Writing stories—her full-time occupation—comes easily to Lyn Arnold. By the time she was thirteen her first story was published. Often when she wants a quiet place to think out story plots, she makes for one of London's art galleries. "I feel so moved by the hundreds of years of dedicated work around me."

There is much to inspire her nearer home, however. From her fifth-floor flat at the top of Highgate Hill she enjoys a panoramic view across London. It is a sight which visitors admire. "I always pointed out the Houses of Parliament," she says. "It took me two years to discover that they were really St. Pancras Station."

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Free Speech

- Did you take your family on holiday?
- Bedtime near a railway station
- How to tackle a shark at sea

I HAVE failed this year to persuade my son and his wife to take a holiday. "But how can we go away, when we've got the children?" they say, almost in amazement.

Theirs is a typical attitude among today's young parents, who seem to think that because they have a family they should stay at home and be miserable. Yet when I was a girl my father used to say when holiday time came round: "We must go away, because of the children." And although we were not well off, and there were six of us, we never missed a holiday.

Don't let's hear the old excuse about rising costs. All our family holidays were spent in two tents by a river. We have a lifetime's memories of happy days—and they cost next to nothing.—E. R., Aldershot.

Danger On The Rocks

Almost every day for the last three months, our West Country newspapers have contained accounts of cliff rescues. In nine cases out of ten, the people involved have simply attempted to climb cliffs for fun. Ignorant of the local conditions, and usually quite unskilled in this difficult art, they soon find themselves in trouble. This necessitates calling out policemen, coastguards and even servicemen to the rescue.

Surely cliff climbing, when indulged in simply as an adventure, should be made a punishable offence. Too often it involves other, more sensible people who give their time, strength and skill, frequently imperilling their lives, without any reward.

Rescue when one is in danger through no fault of one's own is bad enough. But why should thoughtless and stupid people escape punishment when they wilfully and lightheartedly endanger the lives of others?—Mrs. N. M. Gibbs, Westward Hol, Bideford, Devon.

Noisy Way To Sleep

Recently I slept in an hotel which formed part of a railway station. I could hear the distant approach of trains and feel them vibrate through the building. The night air was disturbed by the sound of men's voices and the trundling of milk churns.

I am usually a poor sleeper, but I slept wonderfully. The manager grinned when I told him. "Most people who suffer from insomnia strive for silence," he said. "But the sound of outside noises can bring great mental comfort. Silence is the worst sleep inducer that there is."—E. H., Birmingham.

"A continual stream of various noises, such as one hears at a railway station, does, in fact, induce sleep, even among bad sleepers," says a doctor. "Sub-consciously the mind concentrates on the noises, which shut out all the wandering thoughts that normally keep people awake and have a soothing effect. But intermittent noises have the opposite effect. Their infrequency just jars the nerves at intervals, making sleep difficult."

Fun Of The Fire

Boys of today can join the air cadets, army cadets, sea cadets and many other inspiring organizations.

But why can't they join a fire cadet corps? Thousands of keen youngsters would be attracted to such a corps, and the nation would profit by having

many young, fully trained firemen in a few years.—L. WAKEMAN, Gloucester Road, Gravesend, Kent.

"Some fire officers are in favour of this idea," says an official of the Fire Brigades Union, "and it was suggested a few years ago to the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council. The Union opposed it because we thought that it was not a practical proposition. We thought that the highlight of the training would be riding to a real fire on an appliance, and we considered that that could be very dangerous. Since then the idea has not been raised again."

Fighting Talk

The advice of J. H., of Bath ("Free Speech," August 31), that sharks are scared away by a swimmer who splashes vigorously, reminds me of what I was told by the United States Navy during lectures on aircrew survival.

The approved method of dealing with a shark was to swim straight towards it and punch it on the nose. However, the same instructor's antidote to alligators was "turn 'em over and tickle their bellies." I confess I've never met anyone who has followed either course.—LIEUT. R. G. C., R.N., London.

Holding The Baby

The young British husbands of today must surely be the most domesticated in the world. Meetings which I attend regularly have always begun at 6.30 p.m. But at the last one it was



unanimously agreed to change the time to 7.30 p.m.—so that the husbands would have time to put the children to bed.—G. H., Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

Mowing Down Birds

Wherever I go I hear people say: "Where have all the swallows, larks, cuckoos and other well-known birds gone?"

One answer seems to be that the use of machinery to mow hay and cornfields has resulted in the wholesale destruction of skylarks' and corn-crakes' nests in the low grass. When fields were scythe-mown, very few of these "casualties" occurred.

It has also been said that buzzards and other birds of prey, having been deprived of the rabbits, now go for anything on wings. Is this true?—M. P., Cardiganshire.

"The use of machinery for mowing has undoubtedly resulted in the corn-crake, once a common bird in England, becoming quite rare now," says an ornithologist. "But we never cease to be surprised by the large number of farmers who, if they see a nest, will stop and shift it to one side, replacing it after they have passed."

"It is unlikely, however, that buzzards are killing off our birds. The absence of rabbits, which used to keep the grass short, can be blamed for the absence of some birds, like



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Free Speech

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

wheatears and stone curlews, which make for short grass. But those birds are not dying off. They have simply gone to another place, perhaps even out of Britain."

The Silent Sufferers

I often wonder why Englishmen are so soft. They grumble, curse the government, moan about the weather, but seem unbelievably reluctant to complain or stand up for themselves.

Through the inefficiency of British Railways I was once stranded in London with seventeen other people, and had to pay 25s. for a taxi to my home in Croydon. But I was the only one, so I was told, to complain or make a claim.

My fellow passengers on my train to the City moan because the train is



very often late, and they are for ever saying that they will write to somebody about it. Then, when I complain, I am looked upon as a trouble maker and bearer of exaggerated tales, because nobody else gives my arguments substance by adding their protests.—N. C. THODY, South Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent.

More Wolf Children

I was in India in 1920 and well remember the children who were found in a wolf den and were said to run swiftly on all fours ("Free Speech," August 31). On investigation they proved to be mentally retarded children abandoned by their parents.

A few years later two more "wolf children" were found near Allahabad, India. All the usual fantastic stories were also attributed to them at the time of their discovery, but when they were taken to a mission home for fostering them, too, proved to be mentally retarded and famine stricken.

Developing the muscle power to be able to run with the pack on hands and knees would take many generations. To be able to run on all fours with the speed of a gazelle would necessitate hopping like a kangaroo, and developing a kangaroo action at the speed of a gazelle would take a million years.—W. SHERRARD-SMITH, Herne Bay, Kent.

Charged For Breakfast

Like many other women, all I need in the early morning is a cup of tea. Yet when I am on holiday I have to pay for substantial breakfasts which I don't want.

Twenty or thirty years ago all hotels made a room charge exclusive of meals, and it was only the cheaper apartment houses which put up the combined "Bed and Breakfast" signs.

If hotels did this once they can surely do it again.—MRS. D. V. KENNARD, Hill Top Road, Harrogate, Yorkshire.

Incognito Medicine

It seems to be a practice of pharmacists to remove all means of identification from proprietary drugs prescribed under the National Health Service.

These drugs usually have a limited life and the expiration date is stated on the maker's label. When the pharmacist removes the label or transfers the contents to a plain

container, patients not only do not know whether they are getting what the doctor ordered, but whether it is still effective.—F. J. MILLER, Edward Street, Leamington Spa, Warwick.

"Pharmacists always remove the maker's label unless the doctor specifically advises that the original should be retained," says a pharmacist. "The reason is psychological. In medical practice it is not always regarded as a good thing for the patient to know the character of his medicine. Such knowledge may well be detrimental to his treatment."

Drinks In The Park

During the Victorian era many fine fountains were erected in our public parks and on seafront promenades.

With a few notable exceptions, like Trafalgar Square, the gardens at Chatsworth, and Alton Towers in Staffordshire, most of them seem to have fallen into disuse.

Many people would like to see these fountains restored to all their ancient glory.—F. ARCHER, Tutbury, Staffs.

"Drinking fountains are certainly still popular," says an official of the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association. "We still dispatch an average of forty a year to local authorities, and although we cannot afford to give them away we do contribute towards their cost."

"Demand for them is such that if we had the money we could treble our output."

Safe On The Road

On holiday in a small country town in the Cotswolds, I was greatly impressed by the unfailing road courtesy displayed by the countryman driver. Considerate and good-mannered, he seems completely devoid of the everyman-for-himself attitude of his city cousin. And—most important—no small courtesy extended in return ever passes unacknowledged.—D. AUSTIN, Salisbury Avenue, Broadstairs, Kent.

Safe In The Hotel

While staying in a country hotel in Sussex this summer, I was surprised to find the most elaborate arrangements for escape from the bedrooms in case of fire, including a rope, attached to a pulley, for letting oneself down from the window. Often before, even in quite large hotels, I have slept in bedrooms which would be absolute deathtraps in an emergency.

Is there any legal standard of safety for hotels and guest houses?—Miss E. V. HUNT, Donaldson Road, Kilburn, N.W.6.

"Under the Public Health Act, making buildings safe against fire is the responsibility of individual local authorities," says a Fire Protection Association spokesman. "We issue a code of practice to local authorities if they ask for it."

An East Sussex Fire Brigade officer adds: "Fire escape methods are becoming more standardized because all local authorities are now sending fire



officers to the Fire Service College for training. But we are not too keen on these ropes, unless there is no other way of escape, because they are too hazardous."

Lucky Dip

At Loch Katrine, in the Trossachs, there are several large notices forbidding people to throw coins into the loch.

Despite these warnings, a number of small coins have been thrown into

In clear focus — life today with Acrilan in the foreground of the picture. If you're a busy man, get a suit like this, of 50% worsted and Acrilan, and you'll need no gentleman's gentleman to keep you well groomed. When there's at least 50% Acrilan in the blend this obliging acrylic fibre keeps trouser creases immaculate, prohibits bagging at the knees, reduces the need for brushing and pressing, promotes an unruffled appearance however hectic your day. Look out for women's clothes, like this charming dress, also made with 50% Acrilan blended with worsted. They're right in the picture too!

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GILBEY'S

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WHISKY



Free Speech

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

the water. I wonder what motive compels Scotsmen to throw their money away like this.—J. THOMSON, Springfield Terrace, Huddersfield.

"American soldiers stationed in the Trossachs during the last war started throwing the coins in for luck," says an old Trossachs resident. "The notices were put up recently because Loch Katrine supplies Glasgow with much of its water. But they have



not had much effect on the coin throwers, who are invariably English or foreign visitors. You won't catch a Scotsman favouring his money into Loch Katrine—not even for luck."

For Law-breakers

I am told that if one breaks a building by-law by, say, erecting a garage without authority, if it is not detected within two years there is nothing the local authorities can do about it other than rate the property. Is this correct?—P. H. M., Colchester.

"If a building for which planning permission is necessary is erected without permission being granted and is unchallenged for four years, then it is deemed not to be prejudicial to surrounding amenities and will be allowed to remain," says a Ministry of Housing spokesman.

"But if a building by-law is broken the local authority must act within six months if it wants the owner fixed or within twelve months if it wants the building pulled down. At any time after that it can apply to the Attorney General through the High Court for an injunction requiring the owner to bring the building within the law; although such a move on the part of a local authority would be very rare indeed."

Pleasure To Pay

I recently sold a house, and as I had insured it for its present-day vacant possession value I asked for a rebate of the current premium from the insurance company.

They refunded me £1 7s. without any inconvenience or bother.

Solicitors do not as a rule tell their clients that they are entitled to have the unexpired portion of their current premium returned, and so clients lose their money because the insurance company have not been told

that the house has been sold.—R. PALLISTER, Broom Road, Ferryhill, Co. Durham.

Cruel To Fish

Why do we rant at huntmen and rave at people who shoot birds whose seemingly inoffensive fallacies are allowed to get away with their own possible "brand" of cruelty? How would these so-called sportsmen like to be dangled on a hook stuck fast inside their mouths?—MR. WEST, Birmingham, 28.

Hop-field Frolic

John Moore's book *September Moon* recalls memories of hop picking when strikes were unheard of and we cheerfully picked eight bushels for a shilling.

Any stranger who visited the hop-field was promptly seized by the younger women and girls and, regardless of his best suit, was dumped among the hops in the nearest "crib" (bin), where he was kissed as a further penalty. This "cribbing" was frowned upon by the busheller, who did not appreciate the hops being fattened, or the danger of a cracked crib.

The busheller carried a string of wooden "tallies" (couches measured), and for each bushel measured he would cut a notch in a tally held by the picker, and a corresponding notch in his own. A line indicated when a shilling's-worth had been reached.—P. E. MOORE, New Road, Beumyard, Herefordshire.

Hot Water Habit

My wife explained to me why women had greater resistance to hot water ("Free Speech," September 7). It was, she said, because they were more used to it.—H. S. DARLEY, Main Road, Coniston, Heil.

Pride On Paper

Why do so many people seem to think it smart to write unintelligibly in wriggles, twists and slurs? Perhaps they think that this suggests a unique and overpowering personality. But the main purpose of putting pen to paper should be to convey ideas to others as clearly as possible. I may be as proud of a schoolgirl hand as you would be of a schoolgirl complexion.—MRS. N. D., Lincolnshire.

"Vanity frequently lies at the bottom of this trait," says a psychologist. "Vanity itself may be the result of an inferiority complex, and people who feel inferior often resort to tricks and poses in their efforts to bolster up what they fear to be their weak personalities."

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THE COVER

DISASTER! Days of planning and preparation, and then... flop. Now what? Do we dine by candlelight and discuss Grandmother's old silver? Shall we tell them it's a quaint old recipe we discovered in France on our holiday? Or dare we admit that there's simply been a difference of opinion with the cookery book? Whatever the answer, says cover artist Chittock, let no husband try to console his wife with reassurances to the misfortunes of the great King Alfred. Instead, he should be entertaining the guests: he will have some fast talking to do.



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THE SLEDGE PATROL

by DAVID HOWARTH



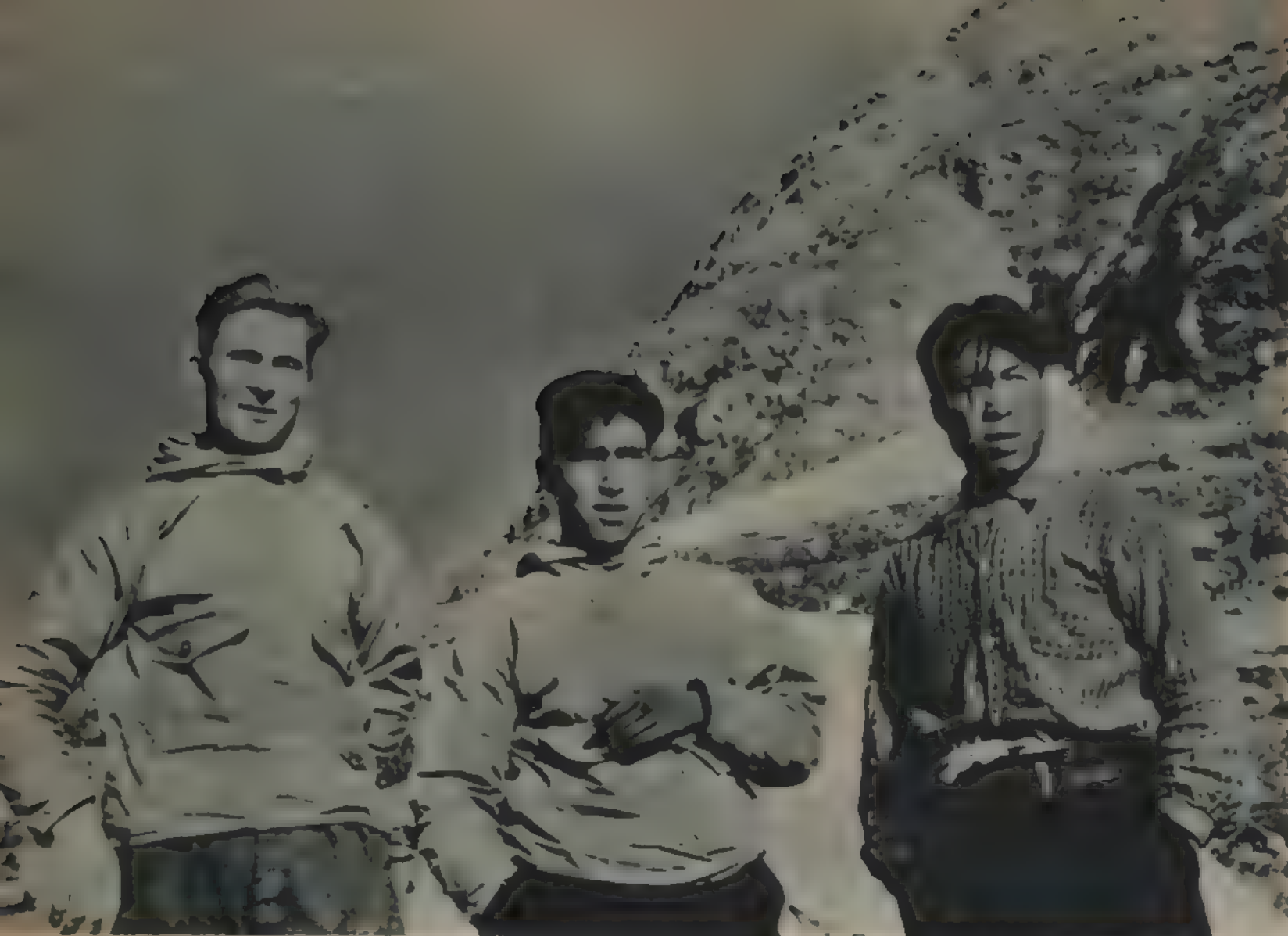
MARCH 11, 1943. On the beautiful, desolate coast of north-east Greenland, six hundred miles beyond the Arctic Circle, a Dane called Marius Jensen was driving his dog sledge across the sea-ice towards an outlying island. There was a hunting-hut out there. He could see it miles away on the snow-covered shore, and he was looking forward to spending the night there, although the hut had been deserted ever since the war began. With two Eskimo hunters, he had come from a weather station called Eskimoneess, sixty miles away, and all their dogs were tired.

Then his dogs pricked up their ears. He thought they had scented a polar bear. And then he heard a shout from one of his Eskimos: "Footprints! Men's footprints!" Jensen looked at the hut again and

"There!" the Eskimo shouted. "Behind the hut?" And now Jensen saw the two men—two sinister strangers

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN BERRY

JOHN BERRY



Poulsen, leader of the sledge patrol, and two of the Eskimos who acted as patrol assistants. Before he caught "Arctic fever," Poulsen was a provincial bookseller in Denmark



Lieutenant Ritter, who commanded the Germans sent to Greenland, was a non-Nazi—and shadowed by the Gestapo

saw a perfectly incredible thing: in the still, cold air, a thin wisp of smoke from the chimney. . . .

Greenland belongs to Denmark. On the west coast there are several small towns and over 20,000 people, a mixed race of Eskimo and Danish origin who call themselves Greenlanders. The whole of the interior of the country is an enormous ice-cap which does not support life of any kind; and on the east coast, the nearest side to Europe, a sea-current from the north brings drifting polar ice right down to the Atlantic, so that ships can only reach that side of Greenland for six weeks or so in the summer of every year. It is almost uninhabited, and always will be.

On this coast great fiords, which are frozen for ten months of every year, lead two hundred miles inland; the mountains are nearly as high as the Alps and much more extensive. In the whole of this tremendous area there are only two villages. Four hundred miles up from its southern end is the settlement of Angmagssalik, which has a population of 1,500 of almost pure Eskimo blood. Four hundred and fifty miles beyond Angmagssalik is Scoresby Sound, with a population of about three hundred. Beyond Scoresby Sound is the territory of north-east Greenland, over seven hundred more miles of beautiful mountainous coast, where nobody lives at all except a few solitary hunters and the radio operators in four weather stations.

Up there, 350 miles north of Scoresby Sound, was Eskimoneess, only distinguished from tens of thousands of other projecting rocks by having a name and a house on it, a solitary wooden house which was Marius Jensen's headquarters: sixty miles beyond that, in the desolation, he found the mysterious footprints. . . .

When Germany invaded Denmark on April 9, 1940, nobody had given much thought to Greenland. After a time, Britain sent forces to occupy Iceland and the Faroe Islands, Denmark's other possessions; but Greenland was too remote to interest the European powers.

But the invasion of Denmark had a profound effect in Greenland. The King of Denmark ordered all Danes to submit to the German occupation, because it was obviously impossible to prevent it. But luckily for Denmark, and for America and Britain too, the Governor of Greenland in 1940 was a man of independent character and some genius. His name is Eske

Brun. It was obvious to him, as it was to everybody else, that the King had not given his command of his own free will; it was dictated by the Germans.

So Eske Brun decided to act as he thought the King would have wanted him to act if he had been free. With this decision, he became the independent ruler of 22,000 people and of the largest island in the world.

Naturally, he wondered what interest the Germans might take in Greenland. The west coast, the civilized and populated side, was safe from raids or landings: the sea and the air on that side of Greenland were firmly under American control. But on the wild east coast there was nothing whatever to stop the Germans landing, except the British Navy, which had more than enough to do.

Eske Brun had not a single soldier, or any weapon more dangerous than a hunting rifle, and so he could hardly think of defending those hundreds of miles of vulnerable coast.

At that moment, scattered along the seven hundred miles of coast beyond Scoresby Sound, there was a total of twenty-six men and one woman. There were twelve hunters, some Danish and some Norwegian. Each of them had a definite hunting district about sixty miles square and lived in a hut in the middle of it. Each of them lived alone, except the one man who had his wife with him. Besides the hunters, there were three Danish weather stations, which had radio transmitters, and one Norwegian one, and each of them had a staff of three or four men.

THE Americans advised Eske Brun to order all these people to come south. By radio through the weather stations the order was sent out and gradually reached the most distant of the hunting districts; and in the course of the summer all the hunters unwillingly drifted in to the weather stations or travelled down to Scoresby Sound.

The gathering of these men out of the wilderness gave Eske Brun a new idea. He had invited the Americans to patrol his coast, and they had hesitated; and so, being the man he was, he offered to try it himself. By radio to Scoresby Sound, he asked for volunteers and chose fifteen. He called them the North East Greenland Sledge Patrol; and as their headquarters, because it was near the middle of their

beat, he selected the wooden house at Eskimoneess.

Seven members of the sledge patrol had wintered at Eskimoneess; the other eight members were stationed at Ella Island, 150 miles to the south, and at Scoresby Sound, two hundred miles farther still. Each of the men had a sledge and a team of dogs; and their assignment from Eske Brun was to patrol the coast from just south of Scoresby Sound up to the farthest limit which is ever navigable—that is, from 70 to 77 deg. north. As the crow flies, their beat was five hundred miles long. Round all the fiords and islands, it was something like ten thousand miles. They were glad of the job. All of them except two had been hunters, and to patrol the whole coast gave them excellent opportunities for hunting on the way. As hunters their living had been precarious, but now they had an assured income, plenty to eat and drink, and an almost luxurious home in which they could rest between their expeditions.

Luxurious is not too strong a word for Eskimoneess, by the standards of the Arctic. It was a single-storey, red-painted house with a large living-room in the middle. Six bedrooms, a radio room and a battery and generator compartment opened off three sides of the living-room, and store rooms were built against the outer walls of the bedrooms, so that the house was in three concentric layers which sheltered and insulated each other and could all be heated by a big stove in the middle.

Besides the main house there were several outhouses which were used for storing coal, reserve provisions, dog food, paraffin and petrol for the radio generators, and there was a little hut in which the hunters cured and stored their fox furs and musk ox and polar bear skins.

Eskimoneess is on the south side of Clavering Island. The house was fifty yards from the shore, and from its window one looked out across a wide open bay to the mountains of the great headland with the curious name of Hold With Hope. Within the few weeks of the summer, in July and August, the waters of the bay are blue and sparkling, and the mountains brown and grey. But for ten months of every year the bay is frozen and the mountains are covered thick with snow, and everything is motionless and silent.

In the days when people lived at Eskimoneess, there was only one time in each year when the



The sledge patrol had to cover north-east Greenland . . . a handful of men defending a wild, rocky, ice-bound territory



Eskimoness hunting station was sledge patrol headquarters. For ten months each year the house was frozen in. Once every summer an ice-breaker got through with supplies

perfect peace of this scene was broken by any sign of civilized human life; and that was when the store ship was sighted, in the last week of July or the first of August, bringing the year's supplies. In the summer of 1942 the supplies had been brought to Eskimoness by an American coastguard ice-breaker. When it had gone, and the unaccustomed noise had died away and the mess had been tidied up, Eskimoness returned to itself again, and the sledge patrol settled in for the winter.

The leader was a Dane called Ib Poulsen. He was a quiet, self-contained young man, the son of a bookseller in a Danish provincial town. Some spirit of adventure had made him ask for a temporary job in Greenland by way of a long summer holiday from the book trade; and it had been enough to infect him with "Arctic fever." He never went back to bookselling.

WHEN the Germans invaded Denmark, Poulsen was home on leave. By then he had spent four years in north-east Greenland, mostly as a radio operator in the service of Count Eigil Knuth, one of the great men of Danish Arctic exploration. Count Knuth had an Arctic station of his own, one of the four stations in north-east Greenland which broadcast daily weather observations. By an extraordinary oversight, even in the summer of 1940, after the invasion of Denmark and after Dunkirk, all these stations were still transmitting in plain international code, simply because nobody had told them to stop, and the British and the Germans were both using their reports.

The men at Count Knuth's station were due for relief. The count got in touch with Poulsen.

"Would you be prepared to return to the Arctic?"

"Of course. But would the Germans let anyone through?"

"If they do not," said the Count, "then the weather transmissions might cease." He looked hard at Poulsen, who smiled, understanding.

The count applied to the Germans for permission to send Poulsen and two other men from Denmark, on the German side of the battlefield, to Greenland, which had declared itself for Britain. The Germans wanted this free gift of weather information to go on as long as possible, and so they agreed to allow a small ship to sail from Norway to Greenland: probably the only time in the war that a ship left Europe with

German permission to make for a country which was on the British side.

Before Poulsen sailed, the count took him quietly aside.

"You understand, of course, what you are to do? In any case, I will give you a direct order. When you get to the weather station, stop the transmissions in open international code."

Nobody ever had a more isolated command than Poulsen. He had never met Eske Brun, who was quite inaccessible on the other side of the ice-cap. He had no uniform or military status; nothing but a radio-telegram in code to say that a sledge patrol was established and that he was the head of it. If anything went wrong, once the summer ship had gone, there was no way out of Eskimoness except by a sledge journey of nearly four hundred miles to Scoresby Sound, and there was no way out of Scoresby Sound at all.

Poulsen's two companions on his strange journey from Denmark had followed him into the sledge patrol and were with him at Eskimoness: Kurt Olsen and Marius Jensen.

Kurt Olsen was only seventeen when they left Denmark, and hardly fully grown. After he left school, he had trained as a radio operator; and he had applied to Count Knuth for a job simply to get away from the German occupation. He had left Denmark timid and shy; but by the time the sledge patrol had assembled, he was a tough, handsome young man who impressed the old hunters as never being afraid of anything. Eske Brun had appointed him second in command at Eskimoness.

Marius Jensen, who was about thirty and had been a hunter before the war, came of a farming family. Like Poulsen, he was reserved and never talked unless he had something to talk about. But these three, Poulsen, Jensen and Olsen, and the others at Eskimoness got on well together because they shared a love of the Arctic and also shared the hardships of Arctic life. So the winter passed pleasantly.

At Eskimoness the sun is seen for the last time each year at about the end of October, and rises again at the beginning of February.

But to say it is dark for three months does not mean one can never see. Falling or driven snow often blots out the view, but when the weather is clear there is starlight or moonlight or the light of the aurora, and the gleaming

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Three of Poulsen's sledge patrol men—Marius Jensen, Peter Nielsen and Kurt Olsen, second in command—on a summer's day at Eskimoness

Germania Harbour hunting station, where Jensen found a German tunic—and was the first man to know that the enemy had landed



Your number's up, Harry

by **GEOFFREY COTTERELL**

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN RESELTINE

With this English girl about the place, life seemed perfect—until she got strange ideas about cricket

If ever I find myself moody, ten to one I'm thinking about the times I used to have before the morning Mrs. Tom came into the store and talked about the pommy sheila.

"She's the niece of a friend of my second cousin," said Mrs. Tom. (Her real name's Thomas but she's always been Mrs. Tom, just like her husband, a mate of mine, is Charlie Tom. Nice woman, but talkative.) "She's straight out from England and can't seem to find anything to suit her in town. So I thought of you wanting someone in the store, Harry, and why don't I write to Mavis to send her up? I mean there's no saying she might not like it here in the bush, and Mavis says she's a nice quiet girl and very hard-working."

To tell the truth I wasn't really listening. I had a lot on my mind. There was the match against Narriburn the next Sunday and the team to be chosen. I was the captain, by the way, and one of the greatest spin bowlers in South Australia that's never been recognized.

"All right then, you do that, Mrs. Tom," I said.

I'd been wanting an assistant for some time. Dad and Mum used to run the store; then it was

As soon as I'd introduced myself at the station, Greta gave an appraising look at the surroundings. "My," she said, "what a dump"



me and the old lady, but for three years now I'd been on my own.

"And then if she lodges with me, say free lodging with board extra, that'll help to pay off the bill," Mrs. Tom said. "I don't like the way you have to wait, Harry, I really don't like it at all."

"Don't you worry about it, Mrs. Tom," I said. It's embarrassing when people feel bad about owing you money. "Anything more you want now besides the groceries?"

"Just a carton of cigarettes, Harry. Warm today, isn't it?"

"My oath," I nodded. It was ninety-eight in the shade, to be precise.

When Mrs. Tom had gone, I put up my "Back in half an hour" notice and went next door to the pub. Some of my mates were there, including Charlie Tom. Charlie's been on the railway since he left off being a drover in Queensland. He's a nice bloke, once you get used to him.

"I hear the wife's got a sheila from town lined up for you," he said. "Don't go and ruin yourself now. You've got the cushiest billet for miles around."

"She's not from town, she's from England," I said. "A pommy sheila. Who's buying me a schooner?"

"Every man must hit the dust," said Fred Matthews. He's the mailman around here. He gets on your nerves sometimes, making philosophical statements like that. "Nobody's buying you a schooner, Harry," he said. "It's your shout."

"I've been living on my own for three years now, since the old lady died," I said, putting some cash on the counter. "I'm looking forward to the next three, don't worry."

George behind the counter filled up our glasses and took the money from my pile. "Are you going to play the copper this week, Harry?" he asked me.

"I've been thinking about it all morning," I said. "Seems to me we've got to. Narriburn are good. We only won by a wicket last year and it was a draw in their favour the year before. Not that I don't think we'd have won finally, of course, but—"

"My oath," said Charlie, "the copper was settling down nicely and, as you'll all remember, I was nine not out—"

We said we didn't remember about him, but it was right about the copper.

This copper, Sergeant Cassidy, was a bit of a problem. He wasn't good enough to make it compulsory to pick him for the team, but he was as reliable a man to go in last as you could find. Besides, Sergeant Cassidy liked the game and he didn't mind standing in the outfield all day, if you asked him.

We'd have played him every week except that, being the law, he was obliged to take notice of the fact that in South Australia it's illegal for pubs to open on Sundays.

Now Sundays are when we have to play our cricket and, as it's only reasonable that a man needs refreshment after a hard game, you can see the problem. If we played the copper, we couldn't open the pub.

Luckily he lived at Bettford, twenty miles away, and you never saw him on a Sunday if he wasn't in the team. So if the opposition was strong we played him, and if we thought we'd win easy we dropped him. Some were for dropping him altogether, but myself, I liked to give a man a go. Cricket's a game that has to be taken seriously.

We took it seriously for another half hour and then I went back to the store, feeling contented. After all, there was nothing to be discontented about.

Jim Ryan was waiting on the veranda. He wanted me to go rabbiting with him. He doesn't do anything but rabbiting. He used to be a fast bowler, but he's slowing up a bit now. After a while a truck drew up with a couple of blokes



Greta sobbed and leaned on me for support. "We can have such a beaut business here," she said

from one of the sheep stations, come to collect their mail and newspapers. Had a yarn with them, of course—in fact we went over to the pub for it.

Later on some blokes came in for cigarettes and Mrs. Paterson's little boy wanted a bottle of ink. It was quite a busy day. If anybody wanted anything in Geary Creek, except beer, they had to get it through me. Keeping the stock-book going was a headache, of course, with all the different items. You ought to have seen the stuff in my storeroom. It was right behind the shop and as big as a barn.

That evening I sent out the invitations for Sunday's match, cooked myself a good tea, and went round to Charlie Tom's to swap a few lies over four or five bottles of beer. Most days were something like that—quiet. But I liked it that way. . . .

I had forgotten all about the pommy sheila when I heard suddenly from Mrs. Tom that she'd had a letter to say Greta was coming. And that next Thursday she came, arriving on the train at Geary Creek Station at ten past six in the morning.

A NIGHT on that train is like spending a few hours on a bucking horse and most people get off it more dead than alive. So when I saw this sheila looking as if she'd just had a wash and set and some skin vibro treatment, it was quite a shock.

She had beaut dark hair done up a bit on her forehead, brown eyes, and a figure that was—well a figure.

What I'm pointing out is that I was impressed by Greta right from the start. I could see that she might turn out to be a good assistant in the store.

As soon as I'd introduced myself, she gave a sort of appraising look at the surroundings. The railway line is about two hundred yards in front of the store and there's a hut which has a sign on it: Geary Creek.

"My, what a dump," she said. You could tell

she was a pommy. I quite like that English way of talking myself.

"Now, now, you weren't expecting Piccadilly Circus," I pointed out.

"Talk about dusty, too."

That was true. Red dust blows all over the place up here and there's no bitumen road for more than a hundred miles.

"The crows fly backwards to keep it out of their eyes," I laughed, though I was a bit disconcerted by her critical tone. "Well, hop in and I'll take you along to Mrs. Tom's. You just got the one bag?"

We drove away and I showed her the two main buildings in the place, my store and the pub. She didn't say a word. I showed her the petrol station and next to that the burned-out school hut—that was the big fire we had fifteen years ago, when I was a kid.

"There's the new one," I said, pointing to where it stands back from the road. "Flash, isn't it?" Then a little farther on I said: "That's the hall where we have movies and socials, and over there's the railway homes—Mrs. Tom's is the second one along."

"Movies?" Greta said.

"Yes, we usually get them once a week. Railway welfare runs it."

"Once a week?"

She looked a bit startled. Probably she hadn't thought we were so civilized in the bush. That hall, by the way. It isn't much to look at outside—just a corrugated iron hut—but inside it's pretty flash. We've had whist drives and all that to get it decorated and there are pictures on the walls—prints by an aboriginal artist brought back by someone in the countrywomen's association from Alice Springs.

"Oh yes, we live all right at Geary Creek," I said.

"What I don't see is how you can want an assistant in a place this size."

I was taken aback to find someone worried about not having enough to do.

"Don't get worried," I told her. "You see, we serve most of the stations for forty miles around. Sheep stations, that is," I added, seeing she looked puzzled.

"All right. When do I start?"

"Come along at nine, if you like. Make it a quarter to, normally."

"Righty ho," she said.

Mrs. Tom came out waving from her door just then and I was able to drive back to the store. I made my breakfast and shaved and began thinking about how to place my field for next Sunday's match.

Sharp at nine she turned up. She came in through the door and stood between the counters, not saying a word.

"Well, I suppose I'd better show you where everything is," I said. "You'll soon get the hang of it."

She still didn't say anything while I went on and explained the lay-out. One side there was the post office, tobacco and cigarettes, groceries, fruit and vegetables and elastic-sided boots. Opposite were sweets, shirts, trousers, tennis balls, pharmaceuticals and toilet stuff. Ice-cream and cool drinks were at the back, and also the door to the storeroom.

When I had finished, I wasn't sure if she'd heard a word.

"It'll take a month to give this place a good clean," she said, looking all round.

"Well, it's hard to keep the dust out," I said. Somehow I seemed to be on the defensive already; which was ridiculous, seeing that I was the employer.

I could hardly believe it though, when I saw the way she set about it. By the time Sergeant Cassidy arrived there was a small-scale dust storm in the pharmaceuticals and you couldn't so much see her as hear her. I was expecting him, because he was playing on Sunday and always turned up when he'd been picked.

"Morning, Bill," I said. "What's new in the

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My boys are beating their pasts

by C. J. COOPER

It's a hard climb back for society's odd men out. But from schools with unlocked gates, seven in ten succeed



C. J. Cooper, headmaster of Risley Hall Approved School, interviews a newcomer. Most of his study furniture was made by former pupils

The dining-room was converted from a stable and wine store. Each section of oak panelling bears carved initials of the boy who fitted it



GEORGE had lost his arm in an accident and had a grudge against the world. He had turned to crime and was obviously heading for prison and a wasted life. At the age of thirteen he was sent by a magistrate for approved school training, and so came to the school at Risley Hall, near Derby, of which I have been headmaster for fourteen years.

He was a difficult lad. "I'm finished," he told us. "I'm no good for anything." And he would neither co-operate nor help himself.

When he had completed his early training, I called him into my study and asked him which craft he would like to learn—cabinetmaking, building, plumbing, joinery or gardening and horticulture. He waved the stump of his arm. "I can't do anything with this lot, can I?" he said.

"Look, George," I told him, "I'm going to tell you something you should have been told long ago. You've been hurt and that's bad luck. But I can show you men who have been much more badly hurt than you in the war—men who have lost both legs or both arms. And they have had enough guts to learn a job and do it well. I'm going to put you in the cabinetmaking class."

George made the beautiful hand-carved chair on which I sit in the school's dining-room. He is an apprentice now. He is one of my successes.

In 1943 I started my school for the Nottinghamshire County Council, in a country mansion which stood in neglected and overgrown grounds. For my staff I had a deputy headmaster, a master to teach gardening and horticulture, and my wife as matron with a small domestic staff to help her.

There were boys of every type among the first fifteen sent to me—boys who had been committed for breaking and entering, for persistent truancy, for being beyond control of their parents and for petty theft. There were grammar school boys with above-average intelligence; others who could not read or write, boys from clean homes and from dirty hovels, boys who had been neglected by their parents and others who had been spoiled.

From all this I set about trying to build up discipline, a tradition, and buildings which could be used as schoolrooms and for teaching crafts. The local villagers were frightened of us. Like most people who have never seen an approved school they thought our boys were dangerous, and instead of open gates they expected barbed wire and guards.

During our first few months contractors were busy converting stables into classrooms and dormitory blocks, and adapting other buildings into our beamed dining-hall. This was later panelled by the boys, who also built workshops, pig-sties, chicken runs and modern staff cottages. A sports ground was made, and the boys have just finished building a fine gymnasium with a



well-sprung floor, shower rooms and a modern décor. They have installed plumbing and central heating, and built their own furniture.

We have an average of eighty boys now. Ours is an intermediate school and the boys range in age from thirteen to seventeen. We can keep a boy three years, but usually we allow him out on licence before that. It depends on his progress. I have a staff of eight experienced teachers, all happily married, and I have a ten-year plan to build a complete school block. The school will then be complete—and I will have reached retiring age.

The staff are chosen for their personalities. Each of them can teach a craft as well as general subjects, and each is different in temperament. One is a quiet man with a deep strength who has had great success with difficult boys by taking them home to join his family circle and play with his own children; another is a young, gay ex-parachutist with a first-class sports record who teaches gymnastics.

The village has now accepted us. Its fête is held in our grounds; our boys go to Communion and the villagers join in our sports.

My work has taught me that all our boys are different, but broadly there are two types. About one in ten is an exhibitionist; the other nine who come to us are victims of environment or circumstances. Many are mentally backward. This is usually an emotional problem, and these boys try to attract attention in other ways.

ONE of our toughest and most difficult boys was a flick-knife teddy from a broken home. He had difficulty in reading, and in school the others had laughed at him. So outside school he had tried to show off by joining a knife gang. We taught him to read. But his father, who had been a fine sportsman and who could not understand why his son was not, stormed at us: "You've made my boy into a bookworm." And it took me a long time to convince him that reading was not a vice. Parents can be a problem, too.

Another lad, whose mother had left home, was a grammar school boy with a brilliant brain. He was morose, had no friends and would



Once derelict, the grounds are now kept trim. Boys can earn money by growing vegetables for the kitchen

Delinquents from broken homes usually respond well when a master opens his own family circle to them



not co-operate. But although he had been sent to us for persistent stealing at school he seemed to be cured of this and we apprenticed him to an engineering firm.

His employer liked him and he was doing well with his evening classes. Then I heard that he was to be charged with theft. He had stolen a massive and highly technical engineering textbook. The employer was bitterly disappointed. "If you had told me you wanted the book you could have had it and paid me whenever you liked," he said. But the lad snapped back: "I never ask favours of anyone."

This time he was liable to be sent to Borstal. I went to court and pleaded that he should be sent back to school. The magistrate was dubious, but finally agreed. When the boy got back to school he came into my office. "Thank you for doing that for me when you didn't have to, sir," he said. From then on, he became helpful and friendly. He started to look happy. Eventually he became an R.A.F. officer on flying duties.

We are proud of our successes. Not all boys become angels, but about seven out of ten of the boys and eight out of ten of the girls leaving Britain's approved schools nowadays do not appear in criminal courts within three years of leaving.

But there was one sad case recently of a boy with a shocking temper who was sent to us for being beyond control. With great patience his housemaster befriended this surly lad, took him home on winter evenings to meet his family, and seemed to have trained him to be a rational, friendly boy. After leaving, however, the boy failed to settle down, stole some money and came back to the school for further training. Again he was placed and seemed happily settled in an outdoor job. But he failed once more and was sent for Borstal training. At the moment he is in prison.

Our old manor house breathes an atmosphere of stability and tradition, and I think that is important. For it is stability that most of these boys need and which we are trying to give them. They do everything for themselves. They are merely shown how to do it, and so develop a real pride in their work.

There is a splendid door in our dining-hall

made by a lad who was almost a genius at wood-work. But when the boy left he became an elephant-keeper in a circus. You might think that he was one of our failures. But we are not aiming to turn out worldly successes. We are aiming to make stable citizens.

Most of those who fail when they leave us fail because they get into bad company, like the bright, intelligent boy who advanced so quickly that I licensed him after a year and he finished his licence period without a stain. But he saw his old spiv friends running around in big cars and wearing expensive clothes while he worked hard learning a craft for low wages—and easy money lured him. He is in Borstal now. A pity, for he is a likeable lad.

Courtesy is essential in training these boys, for many of them have never known it and will copy it. I always say: "Excuse me" if I have to pass in front of them. I am very careful to speak quietly, and no shouting is allowed by anyone—except on the sports field, of course.

I stamp hardest on bullying. Once I caught a big lad threatening to beat up a boy who had lost points for his House by absconding and who had been brought back by the police. "He deserves it, sir," he said.

When I explained to him that however just he might think his argument, he had no right to take the law into his own hands, he seemed bewildered. For some of these lads have acquired a different code of justice and a different sense of morality from most of us.

A boy who seemed admirable in every way and to have the makings of a fine and useful citizen once told me with perfect earnestness: "There's nothing wrong with nicking, sir. You pay policemen good money to stop people nicking and it's up to them to stop it. It's their fault if they can't do their job properly." My deputy caught a lad

jumping ten feet down from a tiny window to get out in the middle of the night. He showed the lad open doors ten yards away. "Bit stupid, aren't you?" he said.

"That's escaping," said the boy contemptuously, pointing to the window. "And that ain't," pointing to the door.

Many of these lads are craving affection and attention. I heard recently that an emotional and mentally backward young lad had just ripped open and destroyed a case which he had saved up his pocket money to buy, and had then jumped on his fountain pen. I knew this boy's background. He was fairly intelligent and came from a good, well-to-do home, but he was overshadowed by a brilliant elder sister who was not only winning academic prizes at her grammar

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The home-made boat is for pleasure on the lake. "But we make the boys work hard for everything they get," says the headmaster

JOHN DULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON



Portrait

by **LYN ARNOLD**

ILLUSTRATED BY ILLUMINI

Old Aristide had painted so many pictures of his wife. But this, above all, proclaimed him as the master

RECENTLY, at the Tate Gallery in London, there was held a definitive exhibition of the works of the late Aristide Maurrot. Apart from the few still-lives, almost all his works are portraits of his wife; Madame Maurrot young, in the moon and dew of youth; Madame Maurrot with a child at her breast; Madame Maurrot guiding that child's first footsteps; Madame Maurrot sewing, darning, knitting, cooking, washing, and so on and so on. Aristide Maurrot's studies of his wife are as famous as Degas' ballet dancers or Van Gogh's sunflowers.

The peak of the exhibition, however, the flower of the middle period of Aristide Maurrot, is the portrait which everyone now agrees may be considered his masterpiece.

It shows Madame Maurrot dressed in outdoor clothes of the delicate chestnut colour of her hair. One hand is raised to just below shoulder height, and the fingers of the other rest on its wrist—the pose of the hands is as exquisite as a flight of Picasso doves: Madame Maurrot is fastening the pearl buttons of long white gloves, prior, doubtless, to going on some small visit or journey.

A particular interest is added to the portrait when one learns from the programme note that this picture has been lent by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, having previously been donated by Robert Lasker, American business man, benefactor and patron of the arts, also son-in-law of Aristide Maurrot. The programme note further adds that this portrait was painted immediately after the marriage of Robert Lasker to Suzy Maurrot.

Though critics have endlessly praised the flawlessness of the composition, the glowing flesh-tones, the living richness of Madame Maurrot's gown, both critics and general public are at one when they see that the true value of the portrait lies in the radiant look on the face of Madame Maurrot.

Aristide himself first named his picture simply *A Portrait Of My Wife*. It has since become known to the world as *La Tendresse*—The Tenderness.

In the year 1910, Robert Lasker, then a stripling of nineteen, sailed for Paris, Europe. His family, an upright company of New England ship-builders, after some cogitation, had finally agreed to finance his trip. Though

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Robert's dilemma solved itself when Madame Maurrot's daughter came into the studio. Now he knew how he felt: he was in love—with her!

THE hat trade recently presented a stiff felt hat with a low flat-topped crown, decorated with a gay pugaree band, to comedian Tommy Trinder, who wore it while appearing in the ITV series *Sunday Night At The London Palladium*. The Mambo was making its first public appearance in Britain. It was the latest attempt to break down the Englishman's conservatism about his hats.

A committee of European hat manufacturers, meeting in Paris last December, decided to launch a determined sales drive in an attempt to introduce radical new styles. As a result the Mambo and the Robin Hood, a rakish variation of the Tyrolean peasant's hat, have recently appeared in the shop windows of British hatters.

Other new styles include hats with pliable brims which can be adjusted to suit the wearer, weather-proof hats made of poplin and covered with a rubber solution, ventilated straw panamas, and models manufactured from hemp fibre, Terylene, and wood pulp.

Even the more formal styles have moved with the times. The brims of bowlers are becoming curlier. A new version of the homburg, called the Diplomat, has an astrakhan finish to match the wearer's coat collar.

In 1950 the thirty-five firms manufacturing men's hats in Britain, located principally at Manchester and Stockport, produced and marketed five million hats. Last year, due to the recession from a postwar boom, and fierce competition from the industry in Hongkong, sales declined to just over three and a half million, but sales to the home market during the first five months of this year jumped by 71,400.

SIXTY per cent of Britain's adult male population wear hats habitually. The hat trade's principal difficulty in stimulating sales by the introduction of new styles is the traditional conservatism of Englishmen. "Some men wait until they reach forty before deciding to wear a hat," says a London hatter. "They usually pick on a traditional style and refuse to experiment. When they need a replacement they put their old hat on the counter and ask for the same again."

Members of the Royal family, the peerage and leading statesmen have influenced hat fashions in the past. King Edward VII introduced the homburg from Germany in 1890. The Duke of Windsor stimulated interest in the trilby, and the bowler was first made popular by an Earl of Leicester. The homburg style named after Sir Anthony Eden is still in demand, but tentative efforts to influence the style worn by Harold Macmillan have proved inconclusive, and the Duke of Edinburgh usually carries his hat in his hand.

Contemporary leaders in men's fashions, such as Michael Wilding and Sir David Eccles, often become identified by a particular hat-style. Terry-Thomas, the film and television comedian, wears different hats to suit prevailing conditions. He recently acquired a brown bowler to match a new overcoat, and wore the combination on a visit to Paris.

"As I was strolling down the Champs-Élysées," he says, "I was perturbed to notice that the hat was causing a great deal of mirth among passing Parisians. One man was laughing louder than anyone else. He was wearing a washed-out pink skull-cap with a big red bobble."

The hat industry's new styles are designed to attract younger men, who are unlikely to be influenced by convention. Hats like the Mambo and the Robin Hood tend to look revolutionary in the shop window, but reasonable on the head; the hatters' problem is how to effect the necessary transmigration. The manager of one Piccadilly shop, anxious to sell a new consignment of trilbies more brightly coloured than usual, placed pink and red bowlers



New hat styles are catching on—and the convert on the right wears a Mambo. One London shop sold pink and red bowlers

Battle over our heads

by ROBERT HOLLES

Robin Hoods, curly brims and Mambos are new weapons in an all-out struggle to make men change their hats

beside them in the shop window. "The idea was quite successful," he says, "and the bowlers were also in great demand for rags and parties."

Overseas, there is a constant demand for new and fashionable shapes and styles. An African chief, in London recently, for the Nigerian constitutional conference, ordered an assortment of brilliantly coloured boaters to be specially made.

In Britain, publicity for men's hats must be conducted with decorum. "Too many gimmicks tend to bring the whole trade into ridicule," says Lewis Juchau, an official of the Hatter's Information Centre. At one of the first hat shows to be organized by the trade, held in London in 1949, three male models paraded behind a wall at the back of a floral rostrum.

In 1955 the trade organized a national hat week. Customers of hat shops throughout the country were shown eight photographs of Richard Attenborough wearing different hats, and invited to place the styles in order of suitability. The £500 prize was won by a farmer, who invested the money in livestock and became a successful show-breeder. The hatters did not consider the experiment worth repeating.

During the past twenty years several hat styles have slowly declined in popularity and others have become almost redundant. Topes are used almost exclusively by polo players. Deerstalkers are in brisk demand by American tourists. Top hats are now used only for weddings, Ascot races and other formal occasions, and most are sold to dress-hire firms. But four

hat-makers recently opened a workshop in Southwark for the manufacture of black and grey toppers and collapsible opera hats.

After a recent heatwave, requests for boaters from all over the country were received by the Mayor of Luton, where the only factory which still makes them is situated. Almost the entire output had been taken up by public schools, butchers, and variety artists.

In the oldest established London hatters' shops, many of the styles are fashioned from moulds which have been used regularly for more than fifty years. When a customer wrote to a Jermyn Street hatter's, asking for a hat to wear in a performance of "Hobson's Choice" by an amateur dramatic company, the manager, William McKee, had the hat made from an existing mould which had been designed for the great-grandfather of Sir Oswald Mosley.

McKee, whose clientele includes the famous, the fastidious, and the sartorially elegant, dares not stock such advanced styles as the Mambo and the Robin Hood, but he often makes tentative efforts to keep up with the times. Once he sold a popular new variety of bowler to a member of White's Club at a time when the conventional type was out of stock. "He seemed quite pleased with it," says McKee.

On the following day his client returned the bowler, which had a rough and hirsute finish. "All my friends at White's have been asking me why I've taken to wearing a busby," he explained.

THE END

The

DR. GEORGE MAYBRICK, thirty years old, a bachelor and contented, was digging a large hole at the bottom of his garden. The hole was ten feet square. He had already dug down four feet, and expected to dig another two. He was looking for an iron tank full of stones that his father had buried there twenty-five years ago.

Most of George's large garden was grass, for the good reason that he found it the easiest thing to grow. He was very proud of this grass. He had even, this past year, been thinking of marking out a tennis court on it; and this was when he noticed something had gone wrong. The grass had stopped growing.

George was a scientist by disposition and occupation, and it had not taken him long to find out what the trouble was. The garden was clogged with moisture. After mature reflection he decided to inspect the drainage.

In the filing cabinet his father had left him, George carefully turned up *Drains*. In old Professor Maybrick's cautionary red ink he found a neat map of the garden, showing a herring-bone complex of drainage pipes running into a large iron tank filled with stones: Reference Z.18.

There was a certain sense of warm achievement running through every line of his father's description of these drains and, as George attacked Z.18 with his spade, he felt a similar glow. He worked industriously till dusk and then, laying down his pipe on a large rock, kicked the mud off his boots and went into the house to reward himself with a bottle of beer.

"Not going out?" Aunt Pru asked

"I might look into the club later," George said cautiously.

His aunt sniffed. George took the beer into his study. He could read this sniff language pretty plainly. This one meant: "George Maybrick, bachelor and cur, what business have you slinking off to a club on a Saturday night when you could be taking some nice girl out? I could name six at least who would be honoured and delighted to go out with you if you picked up the phone this very minute."

George could have named them himself. He had nothing against these girls; good sorts, all of them. The snag was he liked his independence

Preoccupied with this thought, George fumbled in his pocket for his pipe, and then recalled that he had left it in the garden. It was now dark outside. George found a torch and went out. The battery in the torch was weak, and the first thing he did was to fall into the hole.

Swearing freely, he got to his feet and peered round for the torch. It was shining against the spade. George picked it up, and in this same moment registered two remarkable facts. The torch had gone out. The spade had not. It was standing shining faintly in the dark.

George found his pipe and went in to dinner brooding mildly over the phenomenon he had witnessed. It was a somewhat distracting meal, punctuated by curt questions from Aunt Pru, vague replies from himself, and those terrible

ILLUSTRATED
BY COLEMAN

Radioactive Affair

It was all terribly hush-hush . . . until this honey-blonde

vision stole his heart—and his secret

by LIONEL DAVIDSON

sniffs. Saturday nights were becoming nights of horror in this house, and he took himself off as soon as convenient to the club. This club was much patronized by members of the science staff of the local university, of whom George was one—he lectured on geology.

Tonight he bought himself a gin and vermouth and drifted over to a group of his friends and associates. The talk presently got around to a research student who had fallen foul of the head of their department. This student wished to write a thesis on the radioactivity of the waters of the local spa, Bagna Magna, and the Professor opposed it. The facts were all well known, he said, and the only effect would be for the newspapers to print snippets which would alarm the town's gouty and decrepit inhabitants.

Professor Potter's motives in preventing an inquiry into this matter were hotly impugned by several of those present, and one said it was well known that the old boy owned a private hotel in the town and feared the result on his bookings.

George had ceased to take a part in the argument. His head had begun to buzz. *Radioactivity*, he thought. Something in his mind about that. Now what, *what*. . . ?

"Well, in my view," the Professor's bitterest critic was maintaining, "if he's so strong against it, he should come out with his real reasons. Let's stop all this waffle, for God's sake, about well-known facts and so forth. Let's call a spade a spade—"

"Spades!" George said.

"Exactly!" his colleague said, glancing at him sharply, but inquiringly. "What were you saying?"

"Spades!" George said again, emphatically. "Why should they shine at night?"

SOMETHING of a silence developed here. In it George set down his gin and, oblivious of the puzzled glances of the others, walked away. He walked right out of the club. He walked home, through the house, into the garden.

The spade was glowing softly in the moonlight. . . .

First thing on Monday morning, George sought out the research student. "This thesis on the spa water," he said. "What's it all about exactly?"

The student, rendered passionate by frustration, had the facts and the arguments ready to hand. It seemed that the high radioactivity of the water had never been properly worked out mathematically in relation to its mineral source. This student believed that such an investigation would show one of two things—either that there were large deposits of some radioactive substance nearby, or that the spa water travelled much farther than anyone thought, picking up its radioactivity over a wide area.

"I see," George said. "Which view do you favour?"

"I think there's a great heap of uranium somewhere near here."

George's hands were trembling slightly, and he put them in his pockets as he shaped his next

question. "What sort of minerals would you expect to find in conjunction with the uranium?"

"With uranium? Well, taking the official analysis as it is, you would expect to find quite a lot of phosphorus."

George removed his hands from his pockets and grasped both those of the student. "Come with me," he said. . . .

On a Friday afternoon one month later, George came out of Professor Potter's room somewhat red in the face. He was not by nature an argumentative or contentious man, but he had just been called a snake in the grass, and felt bound to refute the accusation. As he pointed out, it was the duty of any loyal citizen who found a heap of nuclear material to report the same to the Atomic Authority. He thought he had found such a heap in his back garden. It was not his fault if the Authority drew certain conclusions with regard to the spa of Bagna Magna.

The Professor had found this reasoning specious and evasive, and asked why George had not had the courtesy to show him the report he had sent to the Atomic Authority. The answer to this—that the report might never have got past old man Potter—was one that George hadn't the crust to give. He blushed and retreated.

He was still blushing as, in the ante-room, he turned to meet the plain but sympathetic face of Miss Lowther, the professor's secretary.

"Stormy session?" she asked.

"I'm afraid it was."

"Never mind, Doctor Maybrick. He'll get used to it. And we'll soon know one way or the other. Isn't the survey party due in a week?"

"Ten days," George said, thinking what ten horrible days they were going to be.

He had no further work that afternoon, and

took himself moodily home. He had not cut the grass all this nerve-racking month, and the garden presented a desolate appearance. The patches where the grass would not grow were surrounded by larger patches where it grew only too well. To work off his irritation he grasped a scythe and began cutting vigorously about him in this green jungle.

He worked until it was dark and then had his dinner. At ten o'clock he went to bed.

The prospect of a weekend away from the university and from his rabid professor cheered him somewhat the next morning, however, and he put on his gum-boots and wandered down the garden to inspect the hole. Presently he took up his spade and continued digging where he had left off. After an hour of this satisfying work, he felt he was becoming more himself again, and took a short breather to light his pipe.

"Found any yet?" a voice asked.

George turned sharply. A honey-blonde vision

Continued on page 38

"Found any yet?" a voice asked. George turned. A girl of quite astounding loveliness was regarding him amiably over the fence





Mr. A to Z

For years I had written books and plays without anybody knowing what I looked like. Now, after a few appearances on the telly, even the taximan knows me by sight. It's wonderful, and I purr with delight—even when they say that I'm lousy



B... for ballet. But for Markova the ballets of Diaghilev might never have been performed today

I'm famous—and I love it

by ALAN MELVILLE

A... for Arthur Askey, assisted by Melville. When *A-Z* ran late, Askey soothed Melville: "Why worry? This isn't a commercial. This is *Austic* B.B.C.—and she doesn't care"

MOST light entertainment shows on TV are put on initially for a run of six programmes. If they click, the run is probably extended to thirteen—a quarter of the year. Once you become involved in the alphabet, as in *A-Z*, you either have to whip the show off right away or, because it appears fortnightly, see most of the year out. We've been lucky in being allowed to do the latter—and in a TV series lasting a year a lot of odd things can happen.

One of the oddest, as far as I was concerned, happened in letter "H." The bill was impressive: Jack Hawkins, Gilbert Harding, Tony Hancock, David Hughes, Irene Handl—and my old friend, Jack Hylton. This was quite a scoop for the B.B.C. for Jack is, of course, a considerable power in commercial television.

Exactly half-an-hour before transmission, a message came through from the Hylton office to say that Jack had lost his voice and couldn't be with us. Panic. Not only were we short of an important six-minute interview, but I was using Jack's name as a running gag all through the programme—even up to the closing announcement: "Jack Hylton appeared by permission of Associated-Rediffusion, thus ending the rumour that Associated-Rediffusion appears by permission of Jack Hylton."

Ronnie Waldman happened to be in the studio when the bomb fell. He said: "Do the interview on your own, Alan—talking to the chair Jack would have been sitting in. Ask all the questions you were going to ask and answer yourself back in Hylton's voice."

"Are you crazy?" I asked.

"In my job I have to be," said Mr. Waldman, and left.

I suppose if I had had longer to think about it I would never have done it; but I did, and by some miracle the stunt came off. I got an excellent press, received a pile of fan-mail, and in the end was most grateful to Jack for not

turning up. Though, a week or so later, I overheard a match of conversation in Shaftesbury Avenue which intrigued me. "You should have seen him, dear," one lady was saying to another. "Sitting all by himself with an empty chair beside him, yakity-yakking even more than when he's got somebody there. I said to Henry, 'If this is what we pay our four pounds a year for, I'd as soon be back with my old cat's-whisker!'"

A-Z is the first thing I have ever been connected with which, rightly or wrongly, has brought me recognition. I mean literal recognition: being stopped in the street by complete strangers and told you were lousy last Friday.

Authors are very rarely recognized and, considering how terrible most of us look, this is probably just as well. Over the past twenty-five years I have written nine books, seven plays, five revues, four musicals, four film scripts, and I shudder to think how many millions of words in broadcasts, articles, short stories and so on. Until I got into the clutches of the telly, few people beyond my family, the neighbours, and my bank manager had the foggiest idea what I looked like.

Now, poor souls, they know. ("A cross between Sergeant Bilko and Harry Corbett in glasses," I read recently. I can't see it.)

It may sound unforgivably conceited to say so, but I love being recognized. My neighbour Mr. Harding erupts with spleen when weekend trippers on the Brighton front point their sticks of rock at him and shout out "Good old Gilbert!" I point out meekly that if he really doesn't enjoy being recognized, he shouldn't go near the front on a crowded Sunday afternoon.

Perhaps in my far lesser case the novelty will wear off, but when a taxi-driver says, "Lovely show last night, sir," I purr with delight and over-tip. Maybe that is why he says it: I don't care.

After church on a recent Sabbath one of the

choirboys ran after me with his autograph album. I admit that he only wanted to get him Alma Cogan's signature, but even as a middle-man it is nice to be recognized.

For the first time in my life I have a fan-mail: small and almost entirely abusive, I admit. For the first time in my life I have had to lay in a supply of postcard-size photographs to send out to ladies who are mad about me—whose average age, I must again confess, works out at just over eight. For the first time in my life I am asked to open *fites*, to judge dog, flower, beauty and baby shows, and to put my name to petitions ranging from saving the St. James's Theatre to stamping out vivisection.

I don't know if all this is progress, but it is certainly fun.

Considering what happened the first time I televised, it seems amazing that I was ever asked back. I'd been broadcasting on sound radio for over twenty years—*Women's Hour*, books programmes, disc-jockey stints, war reporting, commentator at the Royal Variety performances, practically everything except actually acting. I adored radio: with a script in front of me and no visible audience to distract, I felt safe and happy. The very thought of facing a TV camera terrified me. I had never had any training as an actor; without that sheet-anchor of the script I was convinced that I would be lost.

To make matters worse, my first television engagement was the very first edition of *Is Town Tonight* to go out simultaneously on both sound and TV. And just to fill my cup of happiness to the brim, mine was the opening spot in the programme—the first person in this particular edition to be interviewed by John Eliason.

I hadn't been made up since I appeared as a Mountie in the Berwick-upon-Tweed Amateur Operatic Society's production of *Rose Marie*, but I was now given the whole works—and looked ghastlier than ever. By the time I sat watching



E... for G. H. Elliott. Nobody else knows what the Chocolate Coloured Coon uses for make-up



F... for film. The B.B.C. caught Bob Hope on a one-day visit to London—and filmed an interview

C... for Petula Clark. Melville kissed her during the A-Z show—and later received eighteen letters of protest

the evil eye of the camera track slowly in to within a few feet of my puce and perspiring face, I was so scared I didn't know what I was doing or saying. Poor John Ellison got as far as the second "Now tell me—" of the interview, and I cut him short very rudely and said, "All right, all right; don't keep butting in—let me get on with it."

Nobody—not even Danny Kaye—had done such a thing before on *In Town Tonight*; it was enough to make that old girl in Piccadilly Circus drop her basket of louvered vi'lets and nip round the other side of Eros for a stout.

"I slunk heartbroken out of Lime Grove, and it seemed to me to be rubbing it in when the commissionaire said not "good night, sir," but "goodbye."

In the morning my agent rang and said that everyone had been very pleased and there was a chance of a regular TV series. It turned out to be an ill-conceived little horror called *The Balloon Game*. "Regular" was hardly the word for it. How it ever got airborne I cannot think, but at any rate the minute I came near it the balloon was punctured and the programme has never been heard of since.

THE next venture, though it came to an equally abrupt end, was more successful and has recently been revived: *Who Said That?* This is a quiz-cum-discussion affair where the panel has first to identify the authorship of a number of controversial quotations and then decide whether they are true or false. Things like "The female of the species is more deadly than the male" (Kipling: true), or "Early to bed and early to rise, Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise" (Benjamin Franklin, of all people: absolute bunkum).

I was the chairman, and the two mainstays of the show were Gilbert Harding and John Betjeman.

Betjeman, as well as being a thundering good poet and a valiant fighter of lost or nearly lost causes, is always good value on a programme such as this. He is a joy to the chairman if only for his logical, step-by-step approach to the identification of authors. The fact that he is almost always wrong adds hugely to his success.

If, for instance, the quotation is, "Being a husband is a whole-time job," John will close his eyes, start corkscrewing, and say: "Well, obviously not a modern, because a modern would

say, 'full-time job'; certainly a woman, because no man would dare to admit such a thing in public; I should think some domineering historical female—I know, Catherine de Medici . . . or Boadicea. . . ."

One of the chairman's most pleasant duties is then to break the news that the crack was in fact made by Arnold Bennett.

The first run of *Who Said That?* came to a sudden end shortly after the panel dealt with a quotation which in some way brought up the subject of colonization. When I say the panel dealt with it, that is not strictly true: Gilbert got at it with a solo performance of such length, vehemence and vigour that it landed us on all the front pages next morning.

Much of the onslaught he confined to Cyprus, where Gilbert taught for some time and where the recent unhappy situation was just bubbling up. Perhaps a lot of what he said was perfectly true, but it wasn't the ideal time to say it. The poor old B.B.C. very nearly had to open a new department to deal with the protests.

"Why didn't you stop him?" I was asked.

"Have you tried stopping Gilbert in spate?" I retorted. "No one has yet managed to stop Niagara. The two situations are identical."

A week or two after this *Who Said That?* was quietly dropped.

No one could say my early attempts at TV had been riotously successful: one panic-stricken *In Town Tonight*, one completely silent *Balloon Game*, and a few uneasy weeks on *Who Said That?* The programme stayed on the shelf until this summer, when it was hurriedly taken down and dusted and shoved in to replace a show which had flopped called *It Pays To Be Ignorant*—which seems to prove that it sometimes doesn't.

Eighteen hundred quotations were sent in by viewers after the first *Who Said That?* in the revived series—and that seems to suggest that a lot of people were glad to see it back, despite the poor "rating" it was said to have had before.

These "ratings"—both for sound and TV—intrigue and slightly worry me. Particularly now, when there is intense competition between B.B.C. and ITV, there seems a danger of talent being confused with mathematics. Once, when I was halfway through a series of "Melville's Choice" book programmes, Kenneth Adam—then

Continued on page 51



I... for ice shows, with Gloria Nord. Melville tried skating—then refused to interview on ice



L... for Moura Lympny. After giving a piano solo, she took Melville for a dance off-stage—the "Lambeth Walk"



PEACOCK VILLAGE

by CHRISTINE WESTON

ILLUSTRATED BY CRITCHLOW

It was a beautiful bird, a tempting target—and for my brother a chance too good to miss. Now we must face the wrath of the people

I REMEMBER the first time that I was badly frightened. I was a girl of twelve or thirteen, and had presumably run the gauntlet of most childhood fears—fear of the dark, of certain animals, of ghosts and other inexplicable things. But the worst fear of all—fear of one's own species, fear of human beings—had never seriously affected me until the year my family moved to a place called Aligarh, in what was then the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, in India.

My father had lately retired as an officer of the Indian Police, and was practicing as a barrister, specializing in criminal law, for which he had a flair. He was extremely successful, and was a friend and confidant of Indians of all creeds and classes. But he had an increasing unpredictability of temper and a reputation for violent outbursts that had already cost him several good friends and was a cause of deep concern to my mother. It had also produced a wholesome wariness towards him in us children.

My father was an enthusiastic sportsman, and we loved to go with him into the countryside when he went to hunt black buck or partridge in the early mornings before work; or, better still, in the late afternoons, when you could hear the birds calling from every clump of thorn. The birds were wily and would lie like rocks, falling silent when they heard us, and it was the duty of my younger brother, Vee, and me to throw stones into the bushes and scare the creatures out, so my father could shoot them.

Besides partridges (and green pigeons, ducks, and sand grouse), there were any number of peacocks. They fed among the crops, and must have done some damage, but they were considered sacred by the Hindu community, and were therefore taboo to sportsmen. This is not to say that a peacock didn't once in a while get shot and end up as curry in our friends' kitchens or our own, or that one didn't sometimes serve in place of turkey at Christmas time.

Although we knew that our father and his friends had shot peacocks, it had been dinned into Vee and me that we were on no account to do so, and we accepted this unfair discrimination as just one more example of adult inconsistency. Accordingly we let pass many opportunities for bagging a peacock—and what opportunities they were, as the big birds scurried through the young green fields with necks outstretched, the tails of the cocks streaming in the afternoon light, the dowdy hens running behind!

Although my brother was younger than I by

two years, his marksmanship was precociously good, and, attired in khaki shorts and shirt, gun on his shoulder, he often sallied forth with me into the fields and along the canal banks in search of game.

A servant was supposed to accompany us on these trips, but we had our own reasons for preferring to go alone. We were forbidden to eat native food when it had not been bought under our parents' supervision, or to drink sugar-cane juice or unboiled water, but we were apt to be overcome by hunger and thirst long before the hunt was over, and—the villages being by tradition hospitable—we were aware that we'd do best without a chaparron. . . .

On an afternoon in late February, Vee and I set out to hunt, leaving the servants still asleep in their quarters after their midday meal. The weather was warming up, and we were soon sweating freely and taking turns carrying the gun.

Our objective was a village we could see from the roof of our house, about three miles away beyond a gullied plain where fields of mustard were just coming into flower. We must have walked for an hour without seeing anything to shoot except a flock of pigeons, at which Vee fired, missing them all, and a rabbit, at which I fired, missing likewise. By the time we reached the village, we were consumed with thirst. We made our way into the village's main courtyard—a pleasant, shady place that felt like heaven after the glare of the sun—and some of the villagers came out to greet us. Among them was the headman, an elderly, white-haired Brahman, wearing the sacred cord across his chest, who asked news of Father's health.

We answered, and then—though we had been expressly forbidden to touch unboiled water—announced that we were thirsty. As we expected, the headman offered to draw water for us himself from the well in the middle of the courtyard. Reassuring ourselves with the dubious reflection that the Brahman's well must be purer than any other in the vicinity (and, after all, hadn't they been drinking from it all their lives?), we thanked the old man, who then lowered a brass lotak into the well, brought up the water, and poured some carefully into our cupped hands.

When we'd finished drinking, he sent his son, a boy of about Vee's age, to pick custard apples for us from their own tree. These we ate with relish, spitting the black, shiny seeds

on the ground, while we complained about the bad luck we'd had in our search for game.

Some of the villagers amiably suggested that we try a patch of cane and thorn trees a few hundred yards beyond the village, near a pool where, they said, teal sometimes dropped in to feed. The headman's son offered to guide us; like any boy, he was eager to be in on the fun, and it was his idea that we should first take a turn along the village wall, where there were a few scattered bushes that sometimes harboured partridges and occasionally a quail.

The wall, we found when we got there, was built of unbaked brick, topped in places with slabs of red sandstone carved in a design of leaves, flowers and peacocks. The carvings were old, eroded by time and weather, and the Brahman's boy explained that this village had been built on the ruins of another—a much older one that had been destroyed in some long-forgotten battle hundreds of years ago.

As we walked along, I found bits of broken sandstone lying about, some half buried in the ground and all bearing that design with peacocks in it. Presently we disturbed a little family of the actual birds—a cock and two hens—and the cock took wing gloriously and lit on the wall, improbably beautiful in the afternoon sun, with one small, alert eye peering down at us.

The village boy smiled at us, then nodded at the bird. "The peacock is very beautiful," he said.

"Why don't you allow people to shoot them?" my brother asked. "Why don't you shoot them yourselves?"

The boy shook his head violently. "We never kill them," he said.

"Why not?" my brother asked. "You could eat them."

"We do not eat meat."

"Why not?"

The boy hesitated, still smiling. "We do not care for it," he said. "And the bird is beautiful, and quite tame."

The bird on the wall was indeed beautiful and tame. It made no move when we passed directly under it, walking so close that by reaching up a hand I was able to touch the end of its great sheaf of a tail.

We went on for a while, finding nothing worth shooting, and our new friend suggested that we go to a nearby canal, where there might be ducks. The sun was still high, but the shadows were getting longer, and there was a hint of

The peacock pitched forward and sprawled in the path, and my brother leaped on it. I realized that the man at the well could see what was happening. I heard him yell as he came towards us

TWO GREAT FEATURES NEXT WEEK

A NEW NOVEL BY
BRITAIN'S LEADING
THRILLER WRITER

"Find a body...." That was what little Miss Marple had said. So into an uneasy world of family intrigue and jealousy went Lucy, risking danger to help avenge death on the down line... death witnessed from the



Lucy Eyecobarrow

4.50

FROM

PADDINGTON

by AGATHA
CHRISTIE

ANOTHER JOHN BULL EXTRA-COMPLETE

Rescue from Devil's Island

William Willis, the adventurer who crossed the Pacific on a balsa raft, describes his fantastic mission to the dreaded prison island.... In John Bull before book publication

coolness in the air, and everywhere we could smell the scent of mustard flowers and hear the cries of peacocks feeding among them.

We found no ducks on the stretch of canal we came to, but, since it led towards home, my brother and I decided to continue our hunt along it. The Brahman's boy bade us goodbye, explaining that it was time he went back to the village, and invited us to come again soon. We left him, and, turning to look back, I saw him turn also, and look after us.

Vee and I went on down the canal. We heard a partridge call from a clump of bushes, and immediately we had an altercation about whose turn it was to shoot. My brother won the

argument because he happened to be in possession of the gun, and we advanced on the bushes, Vee leading. The partridge heard us and stopped its call, but we knew exactly where it lay.

I began throwing stones into the bush, and the partridge suddenly flew out of it in the unnerving way they have, and Vee fired at it and missed.

"It was an easy shot," I said. "I could have killed it with a stone!"

"Well, why didn't you?" he asked.

"Because I didn't want to be a bad sport."

He gave an angry laugh. "Just for that, I'm going to take the next shot, too," he said.

We were a little away from the canal now. In

the distance was a well, and a man in a white dhoti was driving a pair of buffaloes up and down the incline leading to it, drawing water. We could hear the creaking of the well wheel and the sound of the man's voice as he spoke to his beasts. Right ahead of us, a peahen darted out of the mustard and ran—head down, neck outstretched—along the narrow path that divided one field from the next, and I sensed, rather than saw, my brother's impulse to take a shot at it. It disappeared.

We must have been about a mile from home. By standing on an anthill, I could see the roof and cupolas of our house. A few yards to our left, the mustard stirred as something large moved through it, and a gleaming peacock, all gold-green and sapphire slashed with chestnut colour, broke cover and ran on to the path directly before us and rose a foot or two, and in an instant my brother had thrown the gun to his shoulder and fired.

The bird pitched forward and sprawled in the path with a great beating of wings, its tail rising up like a sail, the fringed edges catching the light as it thrashed about. My brother, handing me the gun, leaped on it, trying to catch hold of its neck.

I felt, all around me, a sudden enormous confusion. On the instant that Vee fired, I had glanced across the field and realized that the man at the well could see. If I'd had any doubts about that, they vanished when I heard him yell and saw him start towards us.

"Leave the thing," I said to Vee. "Leave it, and let's get away from here."

But he was having none of that. The peacock was dead, and now Vee stood up, lifting the shimmering body so it lay over his shoulder and down his back. Vee's hands were bloody, but for the moment his eyes shone with triumph.

People were shouting behind us, and we turned to see our young friend the Brahman's son racing in our direction, followed by a number of men carrying *lathis*—heavy sticks of iron-bound bamboo. The men sounded angry, like hornets into whose nest someone has tossed a stone, and it was then that the fear came upon me.

Instinctively my hands clenched the gun, and if the man who had been working at the well hadn't reached us just then and snatched the gun from me, I think I might, in my terror, have fired it into the advancing throng.

In no time at all, Vee and I were engulfed. We were pushed and jostled, half-deafened by menacing shouts, and glared at by hot, angry eyes. Whether Vee was as frightened as I was, I don't know; he never admitted it later. But in me every drop of sensation had drained away to make room for fear. Fear stiffened my whole being into something bloodless and ossified, while into my imagination seeped memories of what I had read about the Mutiny of 1857, when Indians threw English women and children into wells or burned them alive, and skewered babies on bayonets.

There was nothing to prevent such a thing from happening to my brother and me at that very moment. True, it would be found out, and the villagers punished for our murder. I had an insane mental image of my father, in the rôle of prosecutor, making an impassioned plea for the death sentence, and of all the people around me handcuffed and in leg irons, shuffling off to the gallows in single file....

The elderly Brahman who had given us water and custard apples now appeared and was vociferously apprised of our crime. He looked grim, but he seemed to have a restraining effect on the others. On his suggestion, it was decided that Vee and I be marched home to our father and that retribution be demanded at his hands.

I felt a slight relief from terror, but only slight. It was a mile to the house, and anything could happen before we got there.

A procession was formed, with the Brahman and his son at the head, the man who had confiscated the gun next, then my brother and me, followed by a growling mob of men and boys. My

Continued on page 41



Harry Weetman tees up with dynamite

by FRANCIS HITCHING

His power driving is renowned in international golf. Often he hits so hard that he hurts himself

Winner of every major British tournament apart from the Open championship, Weetman now earns about £5,000 a year

Weetman's wife Freda used to keep him company on five-mile training jogs. Their daughter Jay is two years old

ON the thirteenth tee at South Carolina Golf Club, U.S.A., British golfer Harry Weetman, six feet tall, broad-shouldered, broad-hipped, looked at the flag fluttering almost out of sight on the green 540 yards away. Playing in an exhibition match against two local professionals, he was being subjected to some good-natured barracking by the gallery of spectators. They had heard of his reputation as a long hitter, and were surprised to find him outdriving the other golfers by no more than twenty yards.

As Weetman took a practice swing, a spectator called out: "I bet you a hundred dollars you're not on the green in two." Weetman walked across to him, shook hands, and said: "You must have money to burn."

He hit his drive 310 yards, outstripping the American professionals by about seventy yards. His next shot finished on the centre of the green, with his opponents still one hundred yards short. When the time came for him to putt, he sank the ball to achieve a record low score for the hole. The spectator from whom he collected his hundred dollars said: "It was worth every cent. I just wouldn't have believed it possible."

Weetman's ferocious hitting has made him Britain's leading tournament golfer for the past three years, and the envy of other tournament professionals. Henry Cotton says: "If I had been able to hit the ball as far as Harry when I was younger it would have saved me between two and four strokes a round." Perversely, Weetman's difficulty throughout his career has been to discipline his love of abandoned hitting. "It's tight, withdrawn play which wins big matches," he says. "Nothing gave me more pleasure than to lash out and win that one hundred dollar bet. But I'm not sure it was good for my game."

A brawny, slow-moving Shropshireman of thirty-six, Weetman has a reputation for his power golf. Bob Hope, the American film star

and comedian, once played a round with him and quipped afterwards: "Some people say he's a bad putter. That's because the ball is still shaking when it reaches the green."

This year, on a tour of American tournaments, Weetman won one driving competition and lost one. In the one he lost there was a road running across the fairway 260 yards from the tee. After the first round, Weetman was leading with a 329-yard drive. Then an American pitched his ball on the road. It gave a prodigious bounce and finished twelve yards beyond Weetman's. For his second attempt Weetman used an iron and aimed to bounce the ball on the road. He missed by four feet, and had to be content with second place.

In 1953 he was two holes down to Sid Scott during the Match-play Championship at Walton Heath in Surrey. At the ninth hole he hit an immense tee shot into heather and bracken which grew as high as his shoulders. To the astonishment of spectators, who expected him to use two or three shots in a hopeless attempt to put the ball back on the fairway, he blasted the ball on to the green and sank the putt to win the hole. "The position he was in would have made many golfers give up on the spot," says his caddie, Bill Cutler. "To Weetman, it was a challenge."

This year, at Killermont golf course, near Glasgow, his drive at the tenth hole finished behind a tree. He had the choice of chipping gently out, or risking a dangerous shot which might bounce back from the tree. Almost without bothering, he spun his clubhead violently round the ball, which swung out round the tree, missed some overhanging branches by only a few inches and completed a 180-degree arc to finish on the green. Spectators gasped. "What's the matter?" Weetman asked. "It's not natural to play safe."

Weetman's carefree temperament is held in check by his pretty wife Freda, a shrewd little



woman whose personality is the opposite of his in almost every respect, and who exerts more influence on his game than most golfing wives. "Before I married him," she says, "he wasn't tough enough. He didn't mind sufficiently if he lost. I used to make him repeat: 'Every missed putt costs £5, and every missed drive £50.' Nowadays he is not so soft-hearted."

A fellow-professional, Jimmy Adams, says: "Harry is a changed man since he married Freda. At one time, if he hit a bad shot, he would smile, walk up to the ball, swear at it, and blast it out of sight. Now he plays with far more care, and worries himself into a bad temper over a fluffed shot. His whole approach to the game has changed from nonchalance to responsibility."

Freda Weetman met her husband seven years ago, when she went to take golf lessons from

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Gentlemen first, Ladies!

ILLUSTRATED BY MORDEN

Among the northern islands of Japan live a strange people, the Ainu. Their origin is unknown. They are believed to have inhabited their island for over 2,000 years—an older race than the Japanese—and are credited with knowing the world to be round before the West did!

The Ainu (pronounced Eye-New) are a gentle, peace-loving people even making friends with bears and other animals. Their religion is mysterious, thought to be similar to ancient Druidism, and embraces immortality. When spearing a salmon for food they believe they do it a favour by speeding it to a better world!

Yet this people of a strange land of volcanoes and lakes have a common bond with the rest of the world—they love tea. In their 'table' etiquette, however, they disclaim equality of sexes: women stand while their polygamous lords take tea. Gentlemen first—then the ladies sit and enjoy their 'cuppa'.



(With grateful acknowledgement of the help given by Mr. Kunizawa of the Japanese Embassy.)

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Hornblower and the Guns of Carabobo

by C. S. FORESTER

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

Twelve cannons might win freedom for a nation. But they could shatter the peace of Europe—and the honour of a great sailor

THE *Bride of Abydos* was exactly like a British ship of war; naturally, perhaps, since she had been one most of her life until she was sold out of the service. Now, as she came up into the harbour, she could pass without question for a man o' war brig except that she flew the Royal Yacht Club burgee instead of a commission pendant.

Hornblower put down the telescope through which he had been watching, curiously, her progress into Kingston harbour, and referred again to Barbara's letter, two months old now, which had arrived a fortnight ago:

My dearest husband,

You are shortly to have a visitor, a Mr. Charles Ramsbottom, a millionaire, who has purchased an old ship of the Navy to use as a yacht, which he has named the *Bride of Abydos*, and in which he proposes to visit the West Indies. He has only lately made his appearance in society, having inherited his father's fortune—Bradford wool and army clothing contracts! Yet despite this obscure origin he has succeeded in entering into society, perhaps because he is very young, very charming, unmarried, mildly eccentric, and, as I said, a millionaire.

I have met him frequently of late, in very good houses, and I recommend him to you, dearest, if for no other reason than that he has won some small portion of my heart by a delightful mixture of deference and interest which I might have found irresistible were I not married to the most irresistible man in the world. He has, indeed, won golden opinions in society, both on the Government side and with the Opposition, and he might become an important factor in politics should he decide to enter into them. I have no doubt that he will bring you introductions from personages even more influential than your loving wife. . . .

Hornblower had to read the letter through to the end, although it contained no further reference to Mr. Charles Ramsbottom, but he returned again to the opening paragraph. It was the first time he had ever seen this new word *millionaire*, which occurred twice. He disliked it on sight. And this millionaire had been charming to Barbara; Hornblower was not too sure that really constituted a recommendation.

He picked up the telescope again. The brig rounded-to and anchored very neatly indeed; if she had been a vessel in his command he would have grunted with



Mr. Ramsbottom made an unexpectedly good impression. "My wife wrote to me about you," Hornblower told him

grudging satisfaction. As it was he grunted with a mixture of envy and derision and turned away to await the inevitable call in the seclusion of Admiralty House.

When it came Hornblower fingered the visiting card, with its plain Mr. Charles Ramsbottom, and found some small satisfaction in deciding that he had at last come across a name more unlovely than his own. But the owner of the name, when he was ushered in, made a better impression. In his very early twenties, Ramsbottom was small and slight and—for what it was worth—strikingly handsome, with black hair and eyes, and deeply tanned after weeks at sea; not at all what might be expected of a Bradford wool manufacturer. His dark green coat and formal white breeches were in quiet good taste.

"My wife wrote to me about you, Mr. Ramsbottom," said Hornblower.

"That was very kind of Lady Hornblower. But of course she is kindness personified. May I present my letters of introduction, My Lord?"

BARBARA was perfectly right, then, in predicting that Ramsbottom would win favour with both political parties; here were letters from the Prime Minister himself and from a prominent member of the Opposition. Hornblower glanced through them, and was conscious of an undertone of cordiality despite their formal wording.

"Excellent, Mr. Ramsbottom," said Hornblower. He tried to adopt the tone which he presumed would be adopted by a man who had just read a letter of introduction from the Prime Minister. "Is there any way in which I can be of service to you?"

"None that I am aware of at present, My Lord. I must complete with water and stores, naturally, but my purser is a capable man. I intend to continue my voyage through these charming islands."

"Of course," said Hornblower, soothingly. He could not imagine why anyone should voluntarily spend any time in these waters, where piracy was still smouldering, nor why anyone should wish to visit countries where malaria and yellow fever were endemic, and where civil war, revolution and massacre claimed even heavier toll.

"It would give me the greatest pleasure," went on Mr. Ramsbottom, "if I could induce Your Lordship to visit me on board. It would indeed be an honour, and would gratify my crew. Perhaps I could even persuade Your Lordship to dine on board?"

"We can discuss that after you have dined with me, Mr. Ramsbottom," replied Hornblower, remembering his manners and his obligation to invite to dinner any bearer of a reasonable introduction.

"You are most kind, My Lord," said Mr. Ramsbottom.

By the time Ramsbottom took his leave he had made a very good impression on the reluctant Hornblower. He had talked sensibly about ships and the sea, he was easy and natural in his manner. Hornblower was even prepared to forgive him for having won some small portion of Barbara's heart. And, in the course of Ramsbottom's several days' stay in Jamaica, Hornblower really came to like the young man, especially after having lost two pounds to him in a desperate tussle at whist and then winning ten pounds back.

Jamaican society gave Ramsbottom a warm welcome; even the governor looked on him with approval, and the governor's wife, Lady Hooper, was loud in her praises of his excellent manners and considerate ways.

"I wouldn't have expected it of a Bradford manufacturer's son," said Hooper, grudgingly.

"Are you dining on board the *Bride of Abydos*, sir?" asked Hornblower.

"I am going there to dinner," answered Hooper, who enjoyed food, "but seeing that it is only a yacht I have little hope of dining."

Hornblower arrived on board early, at Ramsbottom's suggestion, so as to have time to inspect the vessel. He was received in navy fashion with side-boys attending the side and a long flourish on boatswain's pipes as he

stepped on board. He looked keenly about him even while he shook Ramsbottom's hand. He could not have said he was not in a King's ship, as his eye took in the gleaming white deck, the ropes coiled in perfect symmetry, the gleaming trophy of pikes and cutlasses against the bulkhead, the brass winking in the sunshine, the British seamen disciplined and orderly in blue jumpers and white trousers.

"You have a most efficient ship and a well-trained crew, Mr. Ramsbottom," he said.

"It is a pleasure to bear Your Lordship say so."

"You have seen no service yourself?"

"None, My Lord."

There was a certain degree of surprise still to be found in the fact that in this year of 1821 there were to be found grown men, even heads of families, who nevertheless had been too young to see service in the wars that had devastated the world for a whole generation. It made Hornblower feel like a centenarian.

Ramsbottom said: "Here come further guests, My Lord, if you will pardon me."

Two planters, Hough and Doggart, arrived, and then the chief justice of the island. So the arrival of the governor would make a dinner party of six, three officials and three men in private life. They gathered under the awning which, stretched across the main boom, shaded the quarter-deck, and watched the reception of His Excellency.

"Do you think the dinner will come up to the ceremonial?" asked Doggart.

"Ramsbottom's purser bought two tons of ice yesterday," said Hough.

"At sixpence a pound that bids fair," commented Doggart.

Jamaica was the centre of a small trade in ice, brought down from New England in fast schooners. Cut and stored away in deep places during the winter, it was hurried to the Caribbean insulated in a packing of sawdust. At the height of summer it commanded fantastic prices. Hornblower was interested; he was more interested still in the sight of a seaman down in the waist steadily turning a crank. It did not seem a very hard labour, although unremitting. He could not for the life of him think of what function that crank could play in the life of the ship.

The guests made their bows to His Excellency, and at his suggestion seated themselves in the comfortable chairs. A steward appeared at once passing round glasses of sherry.

"Excellent, by George!" exclaimed the governor after his first cautious sip. "None of your Olorosos, none of your sweet sticky dark sherries."

The governor, by virtue of his reputed royal blood as well as in consequence of his position, could make remarks that well might appear rude in another man. But the sherry was indeed delightful; pale, dry, infinitely delicate in flavour and bouquet, cool but not chilled. A new sound struck on Hornblower's ear, and he turned and looked forward. At the foot of the mainmast a small orchestra had struck up, of various stringed instruments whose names he had never bothered to learn except for the fiddle. If it were not for the intrusion of this horrible music, there could be nothing more delightful than to sit under an awning on the deck of a well-found ship, with the sea breeze just beginning to come in, drinking this excellent sherry. The governor made a small gesture which brought a fresh glass promptly to him.

"Ah!" said the governor. "You keep a good orchestra, Mr. Ramsbottom."

It was well known that the royal family inherited a taste for music.

"I must thank Your Excellency," said Ramsbottom, and the glasses went round again before he turned an ear to the murmured words of the steward. "Your Excellency, My Lord, gentlemen, dinner is served."

They filed down the companion; apparently every bulkhead had been taken down in the after part of the ship to make a cabin spacious though low. The cannonades on either side struck a subdued warlike note in a scene of

luxury, for there were flowers everywhere; the dining table stood in the centre concealed under a glittering linen cloth.

Wind scoops at the scuttles helped to deflect the trade wind into the cabin, which, under the double shade of the awning and the deck, was pleasantly cool, but Hornblower's eye at once caught sight of a couple of strange objects, like small wheels, set in two scuttles and ceaselessly whirling round.

Then he knew why the seaman was turning that crank in the waist; he was driving these two wheels, which by some ingenious mechanism propelled currents of air from outside into the cabin, acting like windmill vanes but in the opposite sense.

Seated at the table in accordance with the courteous indications of their host, the guests awaited the serving of the dinner. The first course made its appearance—two ample dishes set in dishes even more ample filled with cracked ice. The inner dishes held a grey granular substance.

"Caviare!" exclaimed His Excellency, helping himself liberally after his first astonished stare.

"I hope it is to your taste, sir," said Ramsbottom. "And I hope you will accompany it with some of the vodka here. It is the same as is served at the Russian Imperial table."

Conversation regarding caviare and vodka occupied the attention of all during the first course. The last time Hornblower had tasted the combination was during the defence of Riga in 1812; the experience enabled him to add his quota to the conversation. The next course made its appearance.

"You gentlemen are accustomed to this dish," said Ramsbottom, "but I need not apologize for it. It is, I believe, one of the delicacies of the Islands."

It was flying fish.

"Certainly no need to apologize when it is served like this," commented His Excellency. "Your *chef de cuisine* must be a man of genius."

The sauce that came with it had the merest hint of mustard.

"Ock or champagne, My Lord?" murmured a voice in Hornblower's ear. Hornblower had already heard the governor answer the same question with, "I'll try the hock first." The champagne was dry and insidiously delicate, an ideal companion for the food. The great eaters of antiquity, Nero or Vitellius or Lucullus, had never known what it was like to partake of champagne and flying fish.

"You'll be living differently from this soon, Hornblower," said His Excellency.

"No doubt about that, sir."

RAMSBOTTOM, between them, looked Ra polite inquiry. "Your Lordship's going to sea?" he said.

"Next week," replied Hornblower. "I take my squadron to sea for exercises before the coming of the hurricane season."

"Of course that would be necessary to maintain efficiency," agreed Ramsbottom. "The exercises will last for long?"

"A couple of weeks or more," said Hornblower. "I have to keep my men accustomed to hard tack and salt pork and water from the cask."

"And yourself too," chuckled the governor.

"Myself too," agreed Hornblower ruefully.

"And you take your whole squadron, My Lord?" asked Ramsbottom.

"All I can. I work 'em hard to try to make no exceptions."

"A good rule, I should think," said Ramsbottom.

The soup that followed the flying fish was a fiery mulligatawny, well adapted to West Indian palates. "Good!" was the governor's brief comment after his first spoonful. The champagne went round again and conversation became livelier and livelier, and Ramsbottom deftly kept it going.

"What news from the mainland, sir?" he asked the governor. "This fellow Bolivar—is he making any progress?"

"He fights on," answered the



The cabin echoed to roaring toasts

governor. "But Spain hurries out reinforcements whenever her own troubles permit. The government at Caracas is looking for the arrival of more at this moment, I believe. Then they may be able to conquer the plains and drive him out again. You know he was a refugee here in this very island a few years ago?"

"Indeed, sir?"

All the guests at the table were interested in the desperate civil war that was being fought on the mainland.

Massacre and murder, blind heroism and devoted self-sacrifice, loyalty to the King and thirst for independence—all these were to be found in Venezuela; war and pestilence were laying waste the fertile plains and depopulating the crowded cities.

"How will the Spaniards stand now that Maracaibo has revolted, Hornblower?" asked the governor.

"It's not a serious loss, sir. As long as they have the use of La Guaira their sea communications remain open—the roads are so bad that Caracas has always made use of La Guaira to preserve contact with the outside world; it's only an open roadstead but it provides good anchorage."

"Has Maracaibo revolted, Your Excellency?" asked Ramsbottom mildly.

"The news came this morning," said the governor. "A feather in Bolivar's cap after his recent defeats. But I hope you're not going to venture into that turmoil, Mr. Ramsbottom."

"I have certainly no intention of venturing near the mainland," said Ramsbottom. "At least, not while this war continues. It is a pity, because



and bursts of inconsequential song. But at the head of the table Ramsbottom remained cool and quiet-voiced

Venezuela was my mother's country, and it would give me pleasure to visit it."

"Your mother's country, Mr. Ramsbottom?" asked the governor.

"Yes, sir. My mother was a Venezuelan lady. There I would be Carlos Ramsbottom y Santona."

"Most interesting," remarked the governor.

And more grotesque than Horatio Hornblower. It was significant of the world-wide interests of British commerce that a Bradford woollen manufacturer should have a Venezuelan mother. At any rate it accounted for Ramsbottom's dark good looks.

"I can very well wait until peace is settled one way or the other," said Ramsbottom off-handedly. "There will be other voyages to make. Meanwhile, sir, let me call your attention to this dish here."

The main course had now arrived on the table; roast chickens and a leg of pork as well as the dish that Ramsbottom indicated. What lay in it was concealed by poached eggs covering the surface.

"A made dish?" asked the governor, doubtfully. His tone indicated that at this stage of the dinner he looked rather for a substantial roast.

"Please try it, sir," said Ramsbottom coaxingly.

The governor helped himself and tasted cautiously. "Pleasant enough," he decided. "What is it?"

"A ragout of preserved beef," answered Ramsbottom. "Can I persuade you gentlemen to try it? My Lord?"

At least it was something new; it was like nothing Hornblower had ever

tasted before; certainly not in the least like the beef preserved in brine which he had eaten for twenty years.

"Extremely good," said Hornblower. "How is it preserved?"

Ramsbottom made a gesture to the waiting steward, who laid a square box, apparently of iron, upon the table. It weighed heavy in Hornblower's hand.

"Glass serves equally well," explained Ramsbottom, "but it is not as convenient on shipboard."

The steward was now at work upon the iron box with a stout knife. He cut it open and prised back the top and offered it for inspection.

"A tinned box," went on Ramsbottom, "sealed at a high temperature. I venture to suggest that this new method will make a noticeable difference to the food supply on shipboard. This beef can be eaten cold on removal from the box, or it can be hashed as you have it here."

"And the poached egg?" asked the governor.

"That was the inspiration of my cook, sir."

Discussion of this new invention—and of the excellent Burgundy served with this course—distracted attention from the troubles of Venezuela, and even from Ramsbottom's Venezuelan mother. Conversation became general, and somewhat disjointed as the wine flowed. Hornblower had drunk as much as he desired, and, with his habitual dislike of excess, contrived to avoid drinking more. It was noticeable that Ramsbottom remained sober as well, cool and quiet-voiced, while the other faces grew redder and redder, and the cabin echoed to the roaring

toasts and the bursts of inconsequential song. Hornblower guessed that his host was now finding the evening as tedious as he himself found it. He was glad when at last His Excellency rose, supporting himself by the table, to take his leave.

"A damned good dinner," he said. "And you're a damned good host, Ramsbottom. Wish there were more like you."

Hornblower shook hands with the visitor.

"It was very good of you to come, My Lord," said Ramsbottom. "I regret that I must take this opportunity to say goodbye to Your Lordship."

"You are sailing soon?"

"In a couple of days, I expect, My Lord. I trust you will find your squadron exercises satisfactory."

"Thank you very much," said Hornblower. "Where will you head for now?"

"I shall beat back through the Windward channel, My Lord. Perhaps I shall see something of the Bahamas."

"Be careful of your navigation there. I must wish you good luck and a pleasant voyage. I shall write to my wife and tell her of your visit."

"Please give Lady Hornblower my best wishes and respects, My Lord."

Ramsbottom's good manners persisted to the end; he remembered to send round his cards *pour prendre congé* before he left, and mothers of unmarried daughters much regretted his leaving. Hornblower saw the *Bride of Abydos* in the early dawn reaching to the eastward to round Morant Point with the land breeze, and then forgot

about her in the bustle of taking his squadron to sea for exercises.

It never failed to raise a wry smile on his face when he looked about him at His Majesty's Ships and Vessels in the West Indies under his command. In wartime he would have had a powerful fleet; now he had three small frigates and a motley collection of brigs and schooners. But they would serve his purpose; in his scheme the frigates became three deckers and the brigs seventy-fours and the schooners frigates.

He had a van, a centre, and a rear; he cruised in formation ready to meet the enemy, with rasping reprimands soaring up his signal halliards when any ship failed to keep station; he cleared for action and he turned by divisions into fighting line ahead.

In pitch darkness he would burn blue lights with the signal "enemy in sight" so that a score of captains and a thousand seamen came tumbling from their beds to deal with the non-existent foe. . . .

It was a toughened squadron that Hornblower led back to Kingston; but while *Clorinda* was still working up into the harbour a shore boat came pulling out to her, with on board an aide-de-camp of the governor's with a note for Hornblower.

"Sir Thomas, would you have the kindness to call away my barge?" asked Hornblower.

There was much apparent need for haste, for the note from Government House said, briefly:

My Lord,

It is necessary that Your Lordship should attend here at the earliest possible moment to offer an explanation regarding the situation in Venezuela. Your Lordship is therefore requested and required to report to me immediately.

Augustus Hooper, Governor.

Hornblower naturally had no idea of what had happened in Venezuela for the last two weeks and more. He made no guess while the carriage took him up to Government House at its best pace, and in any case if he had tried he would never have succeeded in coming near to the truth.

"What is all this, Hornblower?" were the governor's opening words to him. "What authority have you for blockading the Venezuelan coast?"

"I've done nothing of the sort," replied Hornblower, indignantly.

"But, damn it, man, I've the proof here. I've Dutchmen and Spaniards and half the nations of the earth here all protesting about it."

"I assure you, sir, I have taken no action on the Venezuelan coast. I have not been within five hundred miles of it."

"Then what does this mean?" shouted the governor.

He held some papers up with one hand and slapped wildly at them with the other, so that Hornblower had some difficulty in taking them from him. Hornblower was bewildered already; he was more bewildered still as he read. One paper was an official dispatch in French, from the Dutch governor of Curaçao; the other was larger and clearer, and he read it first.

Whereas, it began, notice has been received by the Lords Commissioners for executing the office of the Lord High Admiral from the Right Honourable Viscount Castlereagh, one of His Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, concerning the need to establish a Blockade of the Coast of His Most Catholic Majesty's Dominion of Venezuela, and of the Islands pertaining to the Dominion of His Majesty the King of the Netherlands, namely and to wit Curaçao, Aruba, and Bonaire.

Therefore I, Horatio Lord Hornblower, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Rear Admiral of the White Squadron, Commanding His Britannic Majesty's Ships and Vessels in West Indian Waters,

Hereby Proclaim that:

The Coast of the Continent of

South America from Cartagena to the Dragon's Mouth and

The Dutch Islands aforesaid of Curaçao, Aruba, and Bonaire

Are now in a state of blockade, and that

Any vessel of whatever description, whether carrying materials of war or not, found attempting to enter any port harbour or roadstead within the Territory so defined, or

Hovering with the intent to enter any such port harbour or roadstead

Will be boarded and sent in for adjudication under His Britannic Majesty's High Court of Admiralty and

Will be condemned and seized without compensation to owners, freight owners, charterers, captain, or crew.

Given under my hand this First Day of June, 1821.

Hornblower, Rear-Admiral.

Having read this document Hornblower was able to spare a second glance at the other. It was a vigorous protest from the Dutch Governor at Curaçao demanding apologies, the immediate withdrawal of the blockade, and compensation. Hornblower stared at Hooper in astonishment.

"This is in legal form," he said, indicating the proclamation, "but this is not my signature."

"Then—?" spluttered Hooper. "I thought you might be acting under secret orders from London."

"Of course not, sir," Hornblower stared at Hooper for another long second before the explanation came to him. "Ramsbottom!"

"What do you mean?"

Hornblower said: "He's been

posing as me, or as one of my officers at least. Is the Dutch officer who brought this available?"

"He's waiting in the next room. There's a Spaniard there, too, sent over in a fishing boat by Morillo from La Guaira."

"Can we have them in, sir?"

The Dutchman and the Spaniard were men full of indignation, which was not abated in the least by their presentation to the admiral responsible, in their minds, for this trouble. The Dutchman spoke fluent English, and it was to him that Hornblower first addressed himself.

"How was this proclamation delivered?" he asked.

"By one of your ships. By one of your officers."

"What ship?"

"The brig of war Desperate."

Hornblower said: "I have no such ship. There's none in the Navy List. Who brought it?"

"The captain."

"Who was he? What was he like?"

"He was an officer. A commander, with epaulettes."

"In uniform?"

"In full uniform."

"Young? Old?"

"Very young."

"Small? Slender? Handsome?"

"Yes."

Hornblower exchanged a glance with Hooper. "And this brig, the Desperate," he went on. "About a hundred and seventy tons, bowsprit steved nearly level, mainmast stepped rather far aft?"

"Yes."

"That settles it, sir," said Hornblower to Hooper, and, to the Dutchman, "You've been fooled, I'm sorry to say. This man was an

impostor. This proclamation is a forgery."

The Dutchman stamped with annoyance. He was unable to find words to express himself in a foreign tongue for some moments. Finally from his splutterings emerged a name, which he repeated until it was understandable.

"The Helmond! The Helmond!"

"What is the Helmond, sir?" asked Hornblower.

"One of our ships. Your ship—this Desperate—captured her."

"A valuable ship?"

"She had on board the guns for the Spanish army. Two batteries of field artillery, guns, limbers, ammunition, everything."

"Piracy!" exclaimed Hooper.

"It sounds like it," said Hornblower.

THE Spanish officer had been standing by impatiently, apparently only half understanding the English conversation. Hornblower turned to him, and, after desperately trying to recapture his half-forgotten Spanish, entered upon a limping explanation. The Spaniard replied volubly, so volubly that more than once Hornblower had to ask him to speak more slowly.

Ramsbottom had come sailing into La Guaira and had brought his precious proclamation with him. At the merest hint that the British Navy was instituting a blockade no ship had dared to stir on the South American coast, except for the Helmond. She had been badly needed. Bolivar was marching on Caracas; a battle was imminent on which depended the entire Spanish control of Venezuela. Morillo and the Spanish army were in need of artillery. Now not only were they left destitute, but with this news it could be taken as certain that those guns, those two batteries of field artillery, were in Bolivar's hands.

Hornblower translated briefly for the governor's benefit, and Hooper shook his head in sympathy. "Bolivar has those guns," Hooper said. "No doubt about it. Gentlemen, I much regret this occurrence. But I must impress upon you that His Majesty's Government assumes no responsibility for it. If your chiefs took no steps to detect this impostor. . . ."

That touched off a new explosion. The British government should make sure that no impostor wore its uniform or posed as an officer in its service. It called for all Hooper's elephantine tact to quiet down the angry officers. "If you will permit me to consult with the admiral, gentlemen," he said, "we may reach some satisfactory conclusion."

Alone with the governor again, Hornblower struggled with a smile; he had never outgrown his tendency to laugh during a crisis. There was something amusing in the thought that a cocked hat and a pair of epaulettes should change the course of a war; it was a tribute to the power of the Navy that a single tiny ship should exert such enormous pressure.

"Ramsbottom and his Venezuelan mother!" said Hooper. "It's not merely piracy—it's high treason. We shall have to hang him."

"M'm," said Hornblower. "He probably holds a privateering commission from Bolivar."

"D'ye mean to suggest we ought to allow him to continue this blockade of his? Nonsense, man."

"Of course not, sir. I'll arrest him, and I'll send his ship in for adjudication, at the first opportunity. But a friendly power has asked you, sir, the representative of His Majesty, if you have instituted a blockade. You must do everything in your power to demonstrate the truth."

"Now for once you're talking like a sensible man. We must send word at once to Curaçao and Caracas. You'd better go in person."

"I'll sail with the land breeze. Have you any further instructions, sir?"

"None whatever. What goes on on the high seas is your affair, not mine. You're answerable to the Cabinet through the Admiralty. I don't envy you, frankly."

"No doubt I'll survive, sir. I'll sail for La Guaira, and send another vessel

to Curaçao. Perhaps if Your Excellency were to write official replies to the inquiries addressed to you they would be ready by the time I sail."

"I'll draft 'em now." The governor could not repress one further outburst. "This Ramsbottom—and his corned beef and caviare!"

"He used a sprat to catch a mackerel, Your Excellency," said Hornblower. . . .

So it came about that the crew of H.M.S. Clorinda did not spend that night in the debauchery of Kingston as they had expected. Instead they worked until dawn completing with stores and water, so hard that they had no breath to spare to curse the admiral who did these things to them. In the very first light of morning they warped their ship out with the aid of the faint puffs of the land breeze, and Clorinda, her admiral's flag flying at the mizzen, headed close-hauled to the south eastward on her thousand-mile voyage to La Guaira.

Clorinda had on board Brigadier General Don Manuel Ruiz, Morillo's representative, to whom Hornblower had offered a passage back to his headquarters. The man was in a fever to return and put an end to Ramsbottom's blockade; it was clear that the royal forces in Venezuela were hard pressed. He had no thought for anything else during that voyage. The lovely sunsets meant to him merely that another day had gone by without his reaching his destination.

At noon each day, when the ship's position was pricked off on the chart, Ruiz would look long and despairingly, estimating by eye the further distance to be traversed. When the wind drew southerly and foul, as it did for two days consecutively, he was clearly on the verge of accusing Hornblower of being in league with his enemies. He resented the caution of Captain Fell which led to Clorinda's shortening sail as they entered the dangerous proximity of Grand Cay, and at dawn next day he was climbing the foremost shrouds as high as he dared, looking out for the first sight of the mountains of Venezuela—and even then he did not recognize as land the blue streak which he saw.

A shore boat came out to them before ever they dropped anchor, and there was an urgent conference on Clorinda's quarterdeck between Ruiz and the officer it brought out.

"My general is in Carabobo," said Ruiz to Hornblower. "A battle is going to be fought. Bolivar is marching on Puerto Cabello, and my general has taken the army to meet him."

"Where is Ramsbottom and his ship?"

Ruiz looked to the arrival for the information.

"Near Puerto Cabello."

That was the likeliest place, a hundred miles or less to the westward, a roadstead where supplies might possibly be landed, and an ideal situation for intercepting all communications between Curaçao and La Guaira.

"Then I shall head for Puerto Cabello," said Hornblower. "You can accompany me if you wish, Don Manuel. The wind is fair and I'll land you there quicker than a horse would carry you."

Ruiz hesitated for a moment; he knew all about horses and he was suspicious about ships. But the advantage was so obvious that he accepted.

"Very well then," said Hornblower. "Sir Thomas, we'll hoist that anchor again, if you would be so kind. Set a course for Puerto Cabello."

Now Clorinda had the lusty trade wind on her quarter, her best point of sailing; she had her studding sails out and every possible stitch of canvas out, and she flew along. A horse at full gallop might go faster, but no horse could do as Clorinda was doing and maintain full speed for hour after hour, nor could any horse ever attain full speed on the mountain tracks of the Maritime Andes.

Naturally, no amount of speed could satisfy Ruiz. With telescope to his eye he watched the distant coast go by until his weary eye was almost blind, and then he paced about the quarterdeck, trickles of sweat running down



The Dutchman and the Spaniard were men full of indignation, which was not abated in the least when they were presented to Hornblower



"Cast off! Pull!" the Admiral ordered as Gerard tumbled in beside him. The boat swung away from the ship's side

his forehead and cheeks as the sun, climbing to its noonday height, blazed down on him. He turned a suspicious eye on Hornblower when the crew of *Clorinda* poured aloft to take in sail.

"We are going in to shore now, General," said Hornblower soothingly.

The headmen were in the chains as *Clorinda* headed in towards the roadstead. In the middle of their chest Ruiz suddenly turned to Hornblower and stood rigid, listening to another, more distant, sound.

"*Clorinda*!" he said.

Hornblower strained his ears. The faintest, almost impossible noise, and then silence, save for the sound of the ship through the water and the bustle of preparing to come to an anchor.

"Order the 'still' for a moment, if you please, Sir Thomas," said Hornblower.

Now the headmen ceased their chant, and every man in *Clorinda* stood silent. A very distant, flat, detonation. Another. Two more.

"Thank you, Sir Thomas. You may carry on now."

"Cannon!" repeated Ruiz, glaring at Hornblower. "They are fighting the battle."

Somewhere on the outskirts of Puerto Cabello, Royalists and Republicans were locked in combat. And those guns that they had heard? They might well be those that the Helmond had carried, now in the hands of the insurgents and firing upon their legal owners. The fact that artillery was being employed indicated a pitched battle, no petty skirmish. Over there the fate of Venezuela was being decided. Ruiz was pounding his fist into his open palm.

Hornblower said: "Sir Thomas, kindly have a boat ready to land the general without delay."

As the *gig* pulled away from *Clorinda*'s side, Hornblower looked up at the sun, called up before his mind's eye the chart of the Venezuelan coast, and reached a further decision. As the *gig* came skimming back again he was ready with his next order.

"Will you be so good as to make

sail again, Sir Thomas? We can continue to search to the westward for *Ramsbottom* while daylight lasts."

It was desirable to obtain the earliest possible news of the result of the battle, but it was also, or more, desirable to lay hands on *Ramsbottom* as quickly as might be. They had not sighted him between La Guaira and Puerto Cabello; he could not be much farther along the coast.

The sun was descending now, dazzling the lookouts as they peered towards it while *Clorinda* continued her course along the shores of the province of Carabobo. Not so far ahead the land trended abruptly northward to San Juan Point—a lee shore.

"Deck, there!" The lookout at the fore topgallant masthead was bailing. "There's summat on the port bow just in sight. Right in the eye of the sun. But it may be a ship, sir. A ship's masts an' yards, sir, with no sail set."

It would be incredible that *Ramsbottom* had anchored here on this dangerous lee shore. But incredible things had to be done in war. *Clorinda* had long ago taken in her studding sails. Now, after a sharp order from Fell, and five minutes' activity on the part of her crew, she was gliding along under topsails and headsails alone. The sun sank into a bank of cloud, suffusing it with scarlet.

"Deck, there! Two ships, sir. At anchor. One of 'em's a brig, sir. A brig! It was *Ramsbottom* about for certain. Now, with the sun behind the cloud, it was possible to train a telescope in the direction indicated. There they were, sharp and clear against the sunset, silhouetted in black, the masts and yards of a ship and a brig at anchor. Hornblower gave *Clorinda*'s captain his orders.

"Approach as close as you consider advisable if you please, Sir Thomas. And have a boarding party ready to take possession."

"An armed boarding party. My Lord!"

"As you please, He'll never dare to oppose us by force." The guns of the brig were not run out; there were no boarding nettles rigged. In any case, the little brig

stood no chance in an unsheltered anchorage against a frigate.

"I'll anchor if I may, My Lord," said Sir Thomas Fell.

Certainly."

That was the Bride of Abydos, without a doubt. No mistaking her at all. And the other one? Most likely the Helmond. With the revolt of Maracasho this part of the coast had fallen into the power of the insurgents. The batteries of field artillery that she had carried could be ratted ashore here and delivered to the insurgent army gathering for its march on Puerto Cabello. *Ramsbottom*, his task completed, would presumably be prepared to brazen it out, pleading—as Hornblower had already guessed—some privatizing commission from Bolivar.

Hornblower said: "I'll go with the boarding party, Sir Thomas."

Fell shot a questioning glance. Admirals had no business boarding strange craft from small boats—not only when bullets might fly but when one of the infinite variety of accidents possible in small boats might lead to an elderly and not so active senior officer being dropped overboard and never coming up again.

Hornblower could follow Fell's train of thought, but he was not going to wait quiescent on *Clorinda*'s quarterdeck until a report came back from the Bride of Abydos—not when a word would give him the power of finding out several minutes earlier.

"I'll get your sword and pistols, My Lord," said Gerard, the flag lieutenant.

"Nonsense!" said Hornblower.

"Look there!" He had kept his telescope trained on the anchored ship, and had detected activity around them. Boats were pulling hastily away from them and heading for the shore. *Ramsbottom* seemed to be absconding.

"Come along!" said Hornblower. He ran to the ship's side and leaped for the boat's falls; sliding down, clumsily, cost him some of the skin from his soft palm.

"Cast off! Pull!" he ordered, as Gerard tumbled in beside him. "Pull!" The boat swung away from the ship's side, scoured giddily up a swell and down again, the men throwing their weight on the oars. But the boat that

was having the Bride of Abydos was not being handled in the same way as fashion one would have expected of *Ramsbottom*. The oars were being used without any co-ordination; the boat swung round on the swell, and then swung round again as somebody caught a crab. In next to no time Hornblower found himself alongside the straggling craft.

The men at the oars were not the spruce seamen he had seen on board the Bride of Abydos. They were swarthy men clothed in rags. Nor was that *Ramsbottom* in the stern sheets. Instead it was someone with a heavy black moustache wearing some vestiges of a blue and silver uniform.

"Who are you?" demanded Hornblower, and then repeated the question in Spanish.

The boat had ceased its struggles and was lying on its oars, rising and falling on the swell.

"Lieutenant Perez of the First Regiment of Infantry of the Army of Greater Colombia."

GREATER COLOMBIA. That was what Bolivar called the republic he was trying to establish by his rebellion against Spain.

"Where is Mr. *Ramsbottom*?" Hornblower asked.

"The admiral has been on shore for the last week."

"The admiral?"

"Don Carlos *Ramsbottom* y Santona, Admiral of the Navy of Greater Colombia. An admiral, no less."

"What were you doing on board that ship?"

"I was taking care of her until Your Excellency came," said Perez.

"Is there anybody on board, then?"

"Nobody."

The boats soared up a swell and sank down again. It was a sorry state of affairs, not conducive to logical thought.

Hornblower had been prepared to arrest *Ramsbottom*, but it would be another matter to arrest a lieutenant of infantry, in territorial waters.

"Where is the crew of the ship?"

"On shore with the admiral. With the army."

Fighting for Bolivar, presumably. And presumably as artillery men serving in the stolen guns.

"Very well," said Hornblower. "You may go."

It was sufficient to make sure of the Bride of Abydos; there was no purpose in laying hands on men of Bolivar's army who had only been obeying the orders of their superiors.

Hornblower said: "Lay me alongside the brig."

In the fading light the deck of the Bride of Abydos was not in too great disorder. The departing crew had apparently left everything shipshape, and the caretaking party of Scotch-Irish soldiers had not disturbed anything—although below deck it would probably be a different story.

"Aho! Aho!"

Someone was hailing through a speaking-trumpet from the other ship.

"Look out of South at once!" cried from its bucket by the wheel and hauled back: "I am Admiral Lord Hornblower of the British Navy's Service. I am coming aboard."

It was almost dark when he mounted to the deck of the Helmond, to be welcomed by a light of a couple of lanterns. The captain who greeted him was a thick-set man speaking excellent English with a marked Scotch-Irish accent, presumably. "Please come below, sir," he said.

"Perhaps a glass of champagne..."

It was a comfortable, well-furnished cabin in which Hornblower was offered a seat and a glass.

"I was just when I saw your topsails, sir," said the Dutch captain. "For ten days I have been through misery. My ship—my cargo—this shore..."

"What happened?" asked Hornblower.

"That damned little brig fired a shot across my bows with Bonfire still in sight. They boarded me when I have to. Put an armed party on board. I thought she was one of our ships of war. They brought me here and anchored, and the army came out to

us. That was when I knew she was not a ship of war, not British."

"Then they took your cargo?" Hornblower asked.

"They did. Twelve nine-pounder field guns, with limbers and caissons and horse harness. One ammunition wagon. One repair cart with tools. Two thousand rounds of ammunition. One ton of gunpowder in kegs. Everything." The Dutchman was obviously quoting verbatim from his bill of lading.

"How did they get it ashore?"

"On rafts. Those Britishers worked like madmen. And there were seamen among them."

It was a handsome admission, hardly grudging.

"And then every single man went off with the guns?" asked Hornblower.

"Every man. Not too many for twelve guns."

"And they left a Venezuelan guard on board?"

"Yes," said the Dutchman. "You

saw them go when you came. They kept me here, at anchor on a lee shore. Those—those brigands knew nothing about ships. The Desperate started dragging her anchor once. I had to send my own men."

"You were lucky they didn't burn your ship," said Hornblower. "Luckier still they didn't plunder it. You're lucky not to be in some prison on shore."

"That may be so, but..."

"As it is, sir," said Hornblower, rising, "you are free. You can use the land breeze to make an offing. Tomorrow night you can anchor in Willemstad."

"But my cargo, sir! I have been detained. I have been in danger. My country's flag..."

"Your owners can take action as they please. I understand that Ramsbottom is a wealthy man. He can be sued for damages."

"But—but—" The Dutchman

could find no words that would express adequately his feelings regarding both his recent treatment and Hornblower's scant sympathy.

"Your government can address protests, of course. To the Government of Greater Colombia, or to King Ferdinand." Hornblower kept his face expressionless as he made the ridiculous suggestion. "I must congratulate you, sir, on your escape from very serious dangers. I trust you will have a prosperous voyage home."

He had freed the Helmond, and he had laid hands on the Bride of Abydos. That much he had accomplished so far, said Hornblower to himself as the boat took him back to Clorinda. What the Cabinet and the Admiralty would think about his actions he could not imagine. But an admiral could not show apprehension to anyone, certainly not to a captain as stupid as Sir Thomas Fell.

"I'll be obliged, Sir Thomas," he said, when he regained Clorinda's deck, "if you will send a prize crew on board the brig. We shall sail for Puerto Cabello again as soon as it is convenient to you."

FELL might be stupid, but he was a capable seaman. Hornblower could go down into his stifling cabin and compose himself to sleep. He lay on his cot with the sweat trickling irritatingly over his ribs, trying to persuade his mind to cease from debating the situation. The British public was turning a kindly eye on the struggle for liberty that was being waged in every corner of the world. Thousands of British soldiers were serving in the ranks of Bolivar's army just over there on the mainland. Private fortunes in England had been lavished in the cause of liberty, just as Ramsbottom had been lavishing his.

But none of this was any indication as to how the British Cabinet would react; national policy might well be at odds with national opinion. And the Lords of the Admiralty would be as unpredictable as ever. The near future might hold a severe reprimand for His Majesty's Commander-in-Chief in the West Indies; it might even hold disavowal and recall.

It fell calm at dawn, but half an hour later a fortunate slant of wind enabled Clorinda, and the Bride of Abydos a mile astern, to hold their course for Puerto Cabello; the town on its peninsula was already in sight through the telescope and Clorinda approached rapidly. There were fishing boats setting out from the town, small craft which were using oars to enable them to get to seaward, despite the unfavourable wind. As Clorinda drew up to them it became apparent that they were crowded with people, ridiculously overloaded. But they plied their oars unceasingly, and boldly rounded the peninsula into the open sea, turning eastward towards La Guaira.

"I think General Morillo has lost his battle," said Hornblower.

"Indeed, My Lord," said Fell.

"And I think there are plenty of people in Puerto Cabello who have no desire to be found there when El Liberador comes marching in," added Hornblower.

He had heard that the war of independence was being waged with Spanish ferocity, that even Bolivar's reputation had been clouded by executions and massacres. Here was a proof of it. But those crowded boats were also a proof that Puerto Cabello was expected to fall to Bolivar. He had won his battle of Carabobo; a victory in the open field so close to Caracas meant the certain collapse of the royal cause. Presumably Ramsbottom would consider the loss of the Bride of Abydos as a small thing compared with the freeing of a continent.

It was necessary that all this should be confirmed without doubt, however. The Cabinet would be anxious for early and first-hand information regarding the situation in Venezuela.

"Sir Thomas," said Hornblower. "I shall go ashore."

"You'll have an armed guard, My Lord?"

"As you will," said Hornblower. A dozen seamen with muskets would

hardly save him from the clutches of a conquering army, but agreement saved him from argument and reproachful looks.

By the time Hornblower set foot on the pier in the blinding sunlight the little harbour was deserted. Not a fishing boat was left, nor was there a human being in sight. He pressed on, his guard tramping behind him and Gerard at his side. The long winding street was not quite deserted; there were a few women, a few old men, a few children to be seen, peering out of the houses. Then away to his right he heard a brief rattle of musketry, the reports sounding flat in the heavy damp air. Now here came a ghastly column of sick and wounded, hobbling along the road; some fell down to struggle to their feet again, and some, under Hornblower's very eyes, fell not to rise again.

Wounded, half-naked, barefooted, crazy with fever or bending double with abdominal pains, they came reeling along the road, while behind them the rattle of musketry came nearer and nearer. At the heels of the last of the wounded came the first of the rear guard, soldiers whose ragged uniforms were faintly reminiscent of the blue and white of the Spanish royal army. They were not keeping good order, but they were fighting a steady fight, biting open their cartridges, ramming home their charges, spitting their bullets into their musket barrels, and waiting behind cover to get a fair shot at their pursuers.

A dozen officers, their drawn swords flashing in the sun, were among them. The mounted officer in command caught sight of Hornblower and his party and reined round his horse.

"Who are you?" he shouted.

"English," replied Hornblower. But before another word could be exchanged the firing in the rear increased in intensity; not only that, but suddenly from out of a side lane level with the rear guard appeared a dozen horsemen, lancers, their spear-points reflecting the sun, and the rear guard broke in disorder, running wildly down the road. There was a moment when the air was full of bullets.

"My Lord!" expostulated Gerard.

"That's all right. It's all over now," said Hornblower.

The fight had swept past them up the road; nobody had paid them any attention save for the single question of the mounted Spanish officer. The small column of insurgent infantry marching in regular order behind the skirmishers saw them, however, saw the glittering gold, the epaulettes and the cocked hats. Again a mounted officer wheeled towards them with the same question to receive the same answer from Hornblower.

"Ingleses?" repeated the officer. "English? Why—you're a British admiral!"

"Commanding the British squadron in West Indian waters," said Hornblower.

"A pleasure to see you, sir. William Jones, late captain, Twenty-third Foot, now major commanding a battalion in the army of Greater Colombia."

"Delighted to make your acquaintance, Major."

"Pardon me, but I must attend to my duties," said Jones, wheeling his horse again.

"Hooray for England!" yelled someone in the marching ranks, and he was answered by a thin cheer; half of these ragged scarecrows must have been British, mingled indiscriminately with Negroes and South Americans. The cavalry followed them, a flood of men and horses filling the road like a river brimming its banks. Lancers and light horse, sore-backed horses and lame horses; most of the men had coiled ropes at their saddle bows, and they were all ragged and drooping in their saddles with fatigue; from the appearance of both men and beasts they had marched far and fought hard, and now they were pressing on to the limit of their strength after their defeated foe.

A thousand men had passed, estimated Hornblower, judging the column as well as he could, when a new sound came to his ears through the monotonous trampling of the horses' hoofs. A



Hornblower turned to his captain. "Sir Thomas, I shall go ashore"

thumping and a jingling, loud and irregular. Here came the guns, dragged along by weary horses; at the head of the horses walked men ragged and bearded—they were wearing the remains of blue jumpers and white trousers. It was the crew of the *Bride of Abydos*. One of them lifted his weary head and recognized the party. "Good old Horn!" he shouted, his voice was thin with fatigue and sounded like an old man's.

In the mounted officer riding alongside Hornblower recognized one of Ramsbottom's lieutenants; he sat his plodding horse like a sailor, and raised his arm in a weary salute. One gun clattered by, and another followed it. The guns of *Carabobo*, which had won the independence of a continent.

Hornblower realized that he had not met even Ramsbottom, whom he would have expected to be at the head of the artillery column, but as the realization came to him he saw something new before the second gun. It was a horse litter, extemporized from two poles and some sheets of canvas. It was slung from two horses, one fore and one aft. The light of canvas between the poles was shaded by an awning spread above it, and lying in the trough was a man, a smallish man, black-headed and lying feebly against pillows behind him.

A seaman walked at the head of each horse, and with the plodding step of the animals the litter lurched and rolled, and the black-headed man hunched and rolled at the same time. Yet he was able to take note of the group by the roadside, and he made an effort to sit up, and he called an order to the seamen leading the horses which caused them to turn out of the road and stop by Hornblower.

"Good morning, My Lord." He spoke shily, like someone hysterical.

Hornblower had to look twice and more to recognize him. The black beard, the feverish eyes, the shocking dead pallor upon which the tan looked like some unnatural coating, all made identification difficult.

"Ramsbottom?" he exclaimed.

"The very same but a little different," said Ramsbottom, with a cackling laugh.

"Are you wounded?" asked Hornblower. At the moment the words passed his lips he perceived that Ramsbottom's left arm was convulsed in a roll of rage—Hornblower had been looking so intently at the face that the arm had escaped his notice.

"My sacrifice in the cause of liberty," said Ramsbottom, with the same laugh—it might have been of derision or mere hysteria.

"My left hand lies on the field of *Carabobo*," cackled Ramsbottom. "I doubt if it has received Christian burial."

"Good God!"

"Do you see my guns? My beautiful guns. They tore the *Dons* apart at Caracas."

"But you—what treatment have you received?"

"Field surgery, of course. Boiling pitch for the stump. Have you ever felt boiling pitch, My Lord?"

"My frigate is anchored in the roadstead. The surgeon is on board."

"No—no. I must go on with my guns. I must clear El Liberador's path to Caracas."

"The same laugh. It was not derision—it was something the opposite. A man on the edge of delirium keeping a desperate hold on his sanity so as not to be diverted from his aim. Nor was it a case of a man laughing lest he weep. He was laughing lest he should indulge in berceux."

"Oh, you can't..."

"Sir! My Lord!"

Hornblower swung round. Here was a midshipman from the frigate touching his hat, agitated by the urgency of his message.

"What is it?"

"Message from the cap'n, My Lord. Ship on our right in the offing. A Spanish frigate—what looks like a Dutch frigate, My Lord. Bearing down on us."

Derogate news indeed. He must have his flag flying in *Clorinda* to meet these strangers, but it was a maddening



"My left hand lies on the field of *Carabobo*," cackled Ramsbottom. "I doubt if it has received Christian burial!"

moment in which to be told about it. He turned back to Ramsbottom and back again to the midshipman, his customary quickness of thought not as apparent as usual.

"Very well," he rasped. "Tell the captain I'm coming immediately."

"Aye, aye, My Lord." He turned again to Ramsbottom.

"I must go," he said.

"My Lord," said Ramsbottom. Some of his feverish vitality had left him. He was leaning back again on his pillows, and it took him a second or two to gather his strength to speak again, and when he did the words lagged as he uttered them. "Did you capture the *Bride*, My Lord?"

"Yes. He must end this; he must get back to his ship."

"My bonny *Bride*, My Lord, there's another leg of caviars in the after lazaretto. Please enjoy it, My Lord."

The cackling laugh as he lay back was still laughing as he lay back with his eyes closed, not hearing the hurried goodbye which Hornblower uttered as he turned away. It seemed to Hornblower as if that laugh followed him while he hastened to the pier and down into the boat. "Shove off! Put your backs into it!"

They lay *Clorinda* at anchor, with the *Bride of Abydos* close to her. And there, undoubtedly, were the topsails of two frigates, leading in towards them. He scrambled up the ship's side with hardly a moment to spare for the compliments with which he was received. He was too busy taking in the tactical situation, the trend of the shore, the position of the *Bride of Abydos*, the approach of the strangers.

"Hoist my flag," he ordered, curtly, and then, with the customary elaborate politeness, "Sir Thomas, I'd be obliged if you'd get springs on the cable, out of the after ports on both sides."

"Springs, My Lord? Aye, aye, My Lord."

Cables had to be passed through the after ports to the anchor cable; by

hauling in on one or the other with the capstan, Hornblower could turn the ship to bring her guns to bear in any direction. It was only one of the many exercises he had put his crews through during the recent manoeuvres, called for heavy, closely coordinated labour on the part of the hands.

"Sir Thomas, please order the brig to kedge closer in. I want her inshore of us."

"Aye, aye, My Lord."

Now it became apparent that there was some time in hand. The approaching frigates, hull up now when a glass was trained on them from the quarterdeck, were shortening sail, and then, even while Hornblower held them in the field of his telescope, he saw their masts suddenly broaden as they were swung round. They were heaving-to, and a moment later he saw a boat lowered from the Dutch frigate and pulled to the Spanish one. That would mean a consultation, presumably.

The Spaniard's wearing a commodore's broad pennant, Sir Thomas. Will you please be ready to salute it as soon as he salutes my flag?"

"Aye, aye, My Lord."

That consultation took some little time, the second half of one sand-glass and the beginning of the next. A monstrous creaking down below, and the clanking of the capstan, told that the springs were being tested. *Clorinda* swung a port to starboard and then a tripe to port.

"Springs are tested and ready, My Lord."

"Thank you, Sir Thomas. Now will you be good enough to send the hands to quarters and clear for action?"

"Clear for action? Aye, aye, My Lord."

It was a detestable nuisance to take this precaution. It meant that Hornblower's bedding and books and personal equipment down below would be swept away in a horrible muddle that might take days to straighten. But, on

the other hand, if those frigates came down determined to fight, his reputation would never survive being unready for them. And there was something of the old thrill about these preparations: the pealing of the whistles, the hoarse cries of the petty officers, the orderly rush of the men to the guns, the tramp of the marines to the quarterdeck and the sharp order for their officer as they dressed into line.

"Ship cleared for action, My Lord."

"Thank you, Sir Thomas. Stand by, if you please."

There would have been just time even if the strangers had come steadily down and gone into action without parley. By a rapid use of his springs Hornblower would rake the first comers thoroughly enough to have made her captain wish he had never been born. Now he must wait, and the ship's company, standing by their guns, must wait with him, the matches smouldering in their tubs, the first parties standing by with their buckets, the powder boys, cartridge carriers in hand, waiting to start their race from powder magazine to guns and back.

"Here they come, My Lord."

Those topsails were narrowing again; those masts were coming into line. Now the frigates' bows were pointed straight at *Clorinda* as they came towards her. Hornblower held them steady in his telescope; no guns were run out, he could see, but it was impossible to tell if they were cleared for action. Nearer and nearer; now they were almost within extreme random cannon shot.

At that moment there was a puff of smoke from the Spaniard's starboard bow, and Hornblower could not check a gulp of excitement. The breeze blew the puff away, and then the puff was replaced by another.

"Here they start the salute to the broad pennant, Sir Thomas."

"Aye, aye, My Lord."

Thirteen guns for a rear-admiral's flag; eleven for a commodore; twenty-four guns, one hundred and twenty

seconds, exactly two minutes; those ships, approaching at four miles in the hour would be a cable's length closer at the end of the salutes, within distant gunshot.

"They're taking in sail, My Lord!" said Sir Thomas.

So he could see for himself, but there was nothing to be gained by saying so. The two ships obviously had heavy crews, judging by the rapidity with which sail was got in. Now round they went, up into the wind. Hornblower believed he could hear the roar of the cables as they anchored. It seemed like a decisive moment, and Hornblower was about to mark it by shutting up his telescope with a snap when he saw a boat lowering from the Spaniard.

"I fancy we'll be having a visitor shortly," said Hornblower.

The boat seemed to fly over the glittering water; the men at the oars were pulling like madmen—presumably the eternal desire of the men of one navy to show another navy what they could do.

"Boat ahoy!" hailed the officer of the watch.

The Spanish officer in the stern sheets, conspicuous by his epaulettes, hailed back; Hornblower could not be sure of what he said, but the letter that was waved at the same time told the story.

"Receive him on board, if you please, Sir Thomas."

THE Spanish lieutenant looked sharply round him as he came over the ship's side; no harm in his seeing the men at quarters and the preparations made. He picked out Hornblower at once, and with a salute and a bow presented his letter.

Su excelencia el Almirante Sir Hornblower, said the superscription. Hornblower broke the seal; he could read the Spanish of the letter easily enough.

The Brigadier, Don Luis Argots, would be honoured if His Excellency Sir Hornblower would accord him the opportunity of an interview. The Brigadier would be delighted if he could visit His Excellency's ship and would be equally delighted if His Excellency would visit His Most Catholic Majesty's ship.

In Spanish naval usage, Hornblower knew, "brigadier" was equivalent to "commodore."

"I'll write a reply," said Hornblower. "Sir Thomas, please make this gentleman welcome. Come with me, Gerard."

Down below, with the ship cleared for action, it was a nuisance to hunt up writing paper and ink; it was even more of a nuisance to have to compose a letter in Spanish, for in writing misspellings and bad grammar would be far more evident than in speech. Luckily the brigadier's letter itself supplied most of the spelling and the tricky conditional form.

Rear-Admiral Lord Hornblower would be delighted to receive the Brigadier Don Luis Argots in his flagship whenever the Brigadier wishes.

Sealing wax and seal and candle had to be discovered; it would never do to appear careless about these formalities.

"Very well," said Hornblower, giving grudging approval of the second impression after the failure of the first attempt. "Take a boat to the Bride of Abydos as quick as lightning and see if there's any of that sherry left which Ramsbottom served at his dinner party."

The brigadier, when he came up Clorinda's side to be received with the appropriate compliments, was followed by another figure in cocked hat and epaulettes. Hornblower bowed and saluted and introduced himself.

"I took the liberty of asking Captain Van der Maesen, of the Royal Netherlands Navy, to accompany me," said the brigadier.

"It is with much pleasure that I welcome Captain Van der Maesen on board," said Hornblower. "Perhaps you gentlemen will accompany me below. I regret very much that we will not be very comfortable, but, as you



"We would much regret taking strong action, Milord," said the Spaniard. "I am delighted to hear that," Hornblower replied

see, I have been exercising my crew in their duties."

A screen had been hurriedly run across the after part of the frigate, and the table and chairs replaced. The brigadier sipped with increasing and astonished appreciation at the glass of wine offered him. Inevitably several minutes passed in desultory conversation—Spanish was the one language the three had in common—before the brigadier began to discuss business.

"You have a beautiful ship here, Milord," he said. "I regret much to find you in company with a pirate."

"The Bride of Abydos, señor?"

"Naturally, Milord."

Hornblower saw a trap opening. He said: "You call her a pirate, señor?"

"What do you call her, Milord?"

"I am waiting to hear your opinion, señor." It was important not to commit himself.

"Her actions call for explanation, Milord. She has captured and plundered a Dutch ship. That can be interpreted as an act of piracy. On the other hand it might be said she is operating under a so-called commission issued by the rebels in Venezuela. In the one case Captain Van der Maesen will seize her as a pirate. On the other, if she is a privateer, I will seize her as an enemy of my country."

"In neither case, señor, has a court of law determined her status. In the meanwhile, gentlemen, she is in my possession."

Hats were in the ring now. Hornblower met the eyes of the others with the least expression he could manage. Of one thing he was certain, that whatever might be eventually decided regarding the Bride of Abydos, neither the British Government nor the British public would approve of his tamely allowing her to be taken out of his hands.

The Spaniard said: "Milord, I have assured Captain Van der Maesen of my

support in any action he may decide to take, and he has given me the same assurance.

The Dutch captain confirmed this with a nod and a half-intelligible sentence. Two to one, in other words; odds that Clorinda could not hope to face.

"Then I hope, gentlemen, I hope very sincerely indeed, that you decide upon approving of my course of action."

It was the politest way of defying them that he could think of.

"I find it very hard to believe, Milord, that you extend the protection of His Britannic Majesty's Navy to pirates, or to privateers in a war in which His Majesty is neutral."

"You may have noticed, señor, that the Bride of Abydos is flying His Britannic Majesty's flag. Of course you understand that as a naval officer I cannot permit that flag to be hauled down."

So there it was, the ultimate defiance. Ten minutes from now and the guns might be firing. Ten minutes from now and this deck might be littered with dead and wounded. He might be dead himself. The Spaniard looked at the Dutchman and back to Hornblower.

"We would much regret taking strong action, Milord."

"I am delighted to hear that, señor. That confirms me in my decision. We can part the best of friends."

"But . . ." The brigadier had not intended his last sentence to be interpreted as a sign of yielding. He had been uttering, he thought, a further threat. Hornblower's interpretation of it left him speechless for a moment.

"I am overjoyed to find that we are in agreement, gentlemen. Perhaps we can drink the healths of our sovereigns in another glass of this wine, señor—and may I take this opportunity of

acknowledging the debt the rest of the world owes to your country for such an exquisite production?"

By taking their withdrawal for granted, he was giving them a chance of withdrawing gracefully. The bitter moment of admitting that they had been outfaced had come and gone before they had realized it. Once more the Spaniard and the Dutchman exchanged glances, and Hornblower seized the opportunity to pour more wine.

"To His Most Catholic Majesty, señor. To His Majesty the King of the Netherlands."

He held his glass high. They could not refuse that toast, even though the brigadier's mouth still opened and shut as he struggled to find words for his emotions. Common politeness forced the brigadier to complete the toast, as Hornblower waited glass in hand.

"To His Britannic Majesty."

They drank together. "This has been a delightful visit, gentlemen," said Hornblower. "Another glass? No? It cannot be that you are leaving so soon? But I expect you have many duties calling for your attention."

As the sideboys, white-gloved, formed up at the entry port, and the bosun's mates pealed upon their whistles, and the ship's company, still at their guns, stood to attention, in compliment to the departing visitors, Hornblower glanced round. Those sideboys and bosun's mates and gun's crews might be facing imminent death at this moment if that interview had taken a more stormy course. Shaking hands with the brigadier, he made the final clarification of the situation.

"A prosperous voyage, señor. I hope I shall have the pleasure of meeting you again. I shall be sailing for Kingston as soon as the land breeze serves. . . ."

One of Barbara's regular letters, received months later, helped to round off the incident:

"My dearest husband,

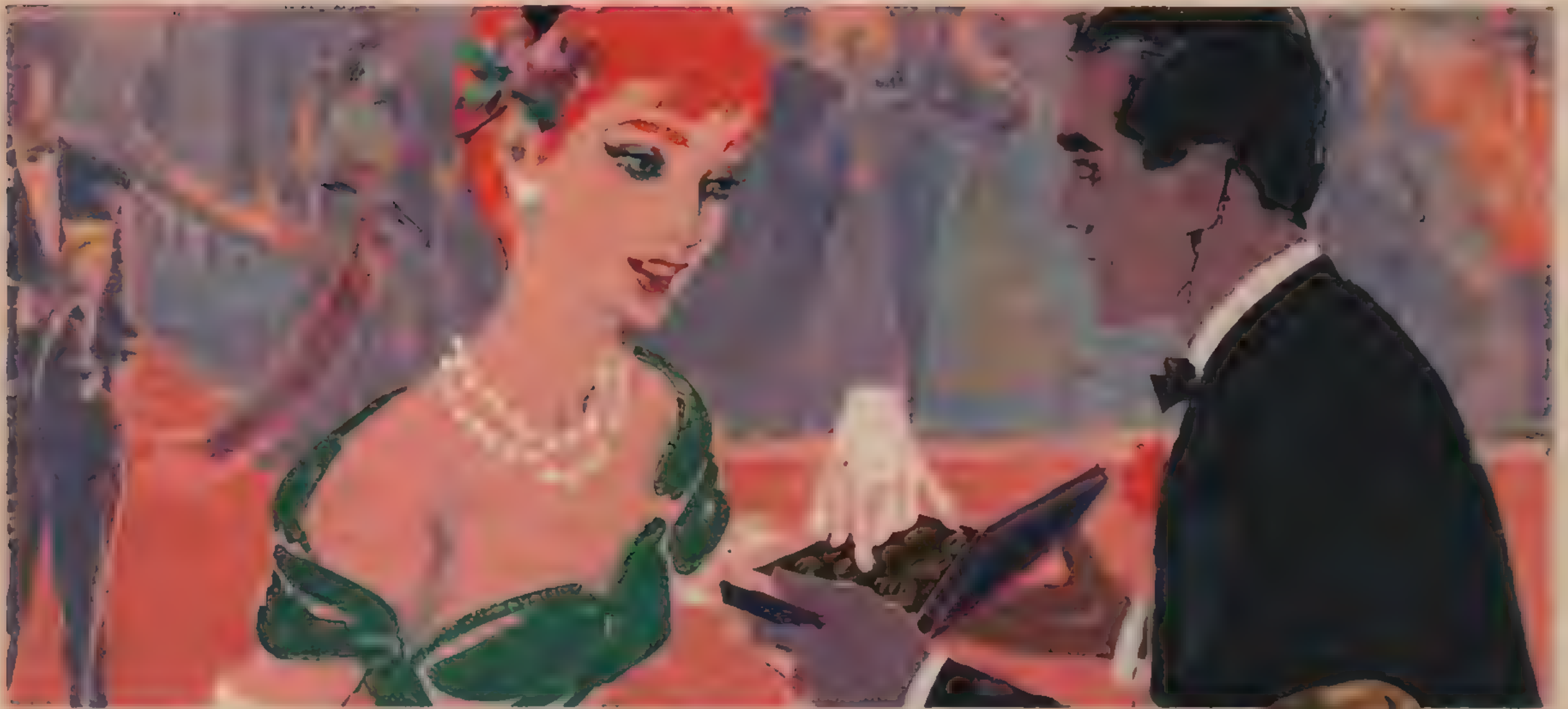
"I have heard a report which would greatly distress me if it were not for the fact that I know my dear husband the Admiral will be delighted. Taking tea today with Lady Exmouth (I know how your dear eyes will open wide with horror at women being in possession of such secrets), I heard that Their Lordships take a most favourable view of your attitude towards the Spanish and Dutch naval authorities in the matter of the Bride of Abydos.

"It has already been decided to extend your command for the extra year, and my pleasure in knowing how pleased you will be at this compliment almost—quite—allays my sorrow at the thought of our further separation. Dearest, there is no woman who could love you—there is no woman on earth who could love any man as much as I love you, the truest, the bravest, the boldest, the cleverest.

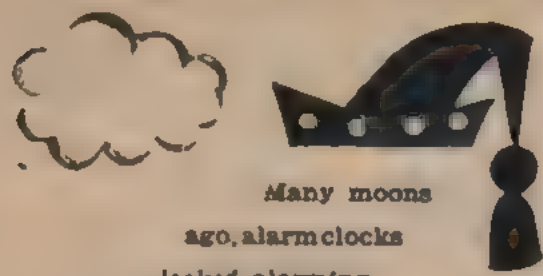
"I must not write like this because there is further news to add. This is that the government has always, apparently, looked with favour at the attempt of the Spanish colonies to attain their independence, and with the greatest disfavour upon the decision of the Spanish Government to attempt their reconquest with troops sent out from Europe. There have been hints that the other Powers, uneasy at the movement towards liberty, have been meditating giving military assistance to Spain in Spanish America. The victory at Carabobo, where poor Mr. Ramsbottom and his guns played such a part, has made this intervention more unlikely.

"It is a great State secret, so great that over the teacups it is mentioned only in whispers, that the British Government meditates making a declaration that it will not permit military intervention in Spanish America. And it appears that our government is in accord with the Americans over this. So that my dearest husband finds himself at the centre of world affairs, as he has always been at the centre of his wife's fondest affections." THE END

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The radioactive affair

continued from page 21

of quite astounding loveliness was regarding him amiably across the fence.

"Wha—wha," George said.

"Had any luck?"

"How do you mean. . . Who exactly. . . ?"

"Miss Lowther's my sister. She told me about your little contretemps yesterday."

"Oh! Ah!" George said, taken aback by both these items. Miss Lowther with a sister like this!

"Mind if I come in and have a look?"

"Please do. Of course. Certainly," George said, looking swiftly about for some means of easy access.

"If you leaned over and made a hand, I could step up."

George leaned over and made a hand. Some powerful reflex force made him fold his arms round the vision's lissom frame as he set her on the ground, and simultaneous electric shocks seemed to course through every part of his body.

"Nice hole," she said gazing agreeably at it.

"I'm really only digging a drain, you know."

"Oh, yes. So Moira said. That's how you came to find the stuff, isn't it?"

"I'm not sure I found anything," George said, gabbling rather. "You know, this is all rather secret. It was very wrong of your sister to speak of it, and I should be glad if you would keep quiet about it yourself."

The girl stared airily at the hole, and then at George. "Well, it's your hole," she said. "We don't want anyone else pinching it, do we?"

"It's not that at all," George said, feeling himself becoming very bothered indeed. "It happens to be quite an important one. It might be the means of saving the country billions of dollars a year."

"Really?"

"Yes, really. The ground under here might be absolutely stiff with uranium ore—we don't know yet. And until we do, we shouldn't talk about it."

"Oh, I can see that," the girl said. "How terribly clever of you!" With her eyes wide and a gentle flush of excitement creeping over her face, he had never in his life seen such a delectable little thing.

"What's your name?" he asked abruptly.

"Lucille."

"Lucille." How exactly Lucille.

"Do you live in Bagna?"

"Only at weekends, when I stay with Moira. I work in London."

George looked tentatively at her. He said: "Are you doing anything tomorrow? I'd thought of buzzing over to Nutwood to have lunch at the Brown Bear."

"Well," the girl said, blinking thoughtfully. "I might have to go up to town early tomorrow. But we could have a drink in the morning."

"Jolly good. Where shall I pick you up?"

"How about me looking in here? I could inspect what progress you have made on the hole. . . ."

THE following day, Sunday, Lucille put in a more conventional appearance at the front door. George found her more ravishing than ever. She was hatless, with a little white cardigan over her gay cotton dress, and she was wearing white shoes and gloves.

"Good morning, Miss Lowther," cried Aunt Pru cheerfully; she had been humming like a motor ever since meeting the girl the evening before. "Beautiful day."

"Isn't it just?" said the girl. "This sunshine is too good to waste. I've brought my camera to take some snaps." She gazed at George. "I thought I might get something rather commanding of you with your hole."

George had some small doubts about the wisdom of having the hole photographed at all just yet, but Aunt Pru was twittering around so maddeningly that he was glad to get the girl out into the garden. Here, to get the thing over quickly, he took up a suitably

WHY?



ONE night just before Christmas, a policeman on point duty saw a car veering from side to side of the road as it approached him. When he signalled it to stop, it pulled in and two men stepped—or rather swayed—out of it. One man was the owner of the car and the other was a friend of his named Shepherd, who had been driving. Both were drunk.

They were taken to the local police station, where Shepherd was charged with driving a car while under the influence of drink. The police also charged the car

owner with aiding and abetting Shepherd.

When they stood their trial at the Quarter Sessions, the policeman gave evidence about the way in which the car was driven, and a doctor said that he had examined the men an hour after their arrest. In his view, the car owner was, at that time, still very drunk.

But when the prosecution evidence was finished, the Recorder ruled that there was no case to answer as far as the owner was concerned. He directed the jury that it was their duty in law to acquit him.

WHY?

A barrister explains the Recorder's ruling on page 41

commanding position in the hole, with his spade held gaily at the slope.

"What's in that box?" the girl asked.

"Oh, that," George said. He had located the tank the previous evening, and had begun turning out the stones into a large wooden box. "Just stones."

"What kind of stones?"

"Heavy ones. Let's hop into the car and get to the Brown Bear before it fills up."

"Well, let's just have one more picture of you holding the box."

"Holding that box!" said George in consternation. "What on earth for?"

"To show how strong you are."

Feeling compliance was quicker than argument, George gritted his teeth and raised the box a few inches.

"M'm, muscle man!" Lucille said, very rewardingly; and then they hopped into the little tourer and buzzed merrily off to Nutwood.

They spent an hour at the Brown Bear, sitting out in the back garden, and George couldn't remember a more delightful one in all his life. But at half-past one Lucille looked at her watch and jumped up. "My, I've got to fly. Moira is making me an early lunch and I'm catching the three-fifteen to town."

George would have liked to know if she was flying to meet some other male, but could not bring himself to inquire. He ran her back to Bagna Magna and left her, empty of heart, with the promise that they would meet again next weekend.

He mooned around in the garden for the rest of the day in a state of extreme mental confusion. He felt restless, empty in the pit of his stomach, uncoordinated. He wondered what sort of life Lucille led in London, why she had to rush so suddenly back without explanation.

He slept badly that night and awoke, unrested and weary, to hear faint cries coming from below. Something seemed to have affected Aunt Pru's normally all-too-audible reveille.

"Coming!" he called, and tottered down the stairs. His eyes, never at their best at this hour, were playing tricks: he had the impression that

Aunt Pru was sitting on the floor in the hall reading the newspaper.

"What is it?" he said savagely.

"You never told me," Aunt Pru said.

"Oh, George, you never told me!"

George looked at the paper she held limply out to him. URANIUM FOUND IN BRITAIN, the huge headline said. TONS AND TONS AND TONS, SAYS DR. GEORGE. And then: "Dr. George Maybrick, handsome thirty-year-old bachelor and university lecturer in geology, struck it rich yesterday, while digging in his garden. . . . 'The whole of Bagna is practically sitting on it,' Dr. Maybrick told me." There followed something about urgent instructions for a survey team, and there was a monstrous picture of himself looking silly with his spade at the slope, and another of his hands holding the box of stones. Rocks of pure uranium, the caption said.

So much George saw before a weakness in his legs compelled him to join Aunt Pru on the floor. . . .

Ninety minutes later, in response to a telephone call almost pathological in its venom, George made his way to Professor Potter's office. Miss Lowther was crying softly at her desk.

"Oh, Dr. Maybrick, I'm so terribly sorry. I had no idea Lucille went to see you. I shall never forgive myself, never. One has to be so careful with her working for that newspaper. . . ."

An angry battering sound made itself heard from the next room.

The professor, springing from his chair as George entered, looked like nothing so much as a little red goblin. He started dancing so alarmingly that George, fearing for the old buffer's heart, accepted all his strictures without defence or comment.

Professor Potter held the floor for ten minutes and, when he had finished, George went silently out of the room. Miss Lowther, wringing her hanky in agonies of remorse, awaited him.

"I've been suspended," George said woodenly, "until the survey party gives its findings. Then he'll report to the principal."

He patted Miss Lowther's shoulder and departed to find some peaceful place for his own despair. Lucille had tricked him, had deceived him, had

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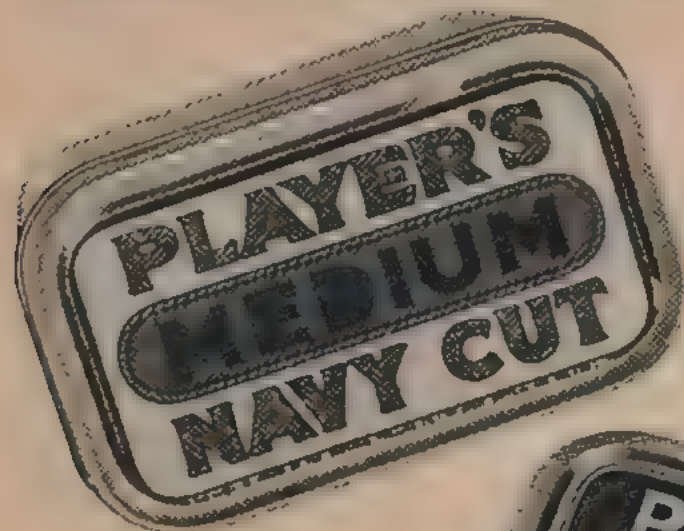
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played with him. Oh, the odiousness of it! The agony of it! And she the only girl he had ever truly fallen for!

Gloomily he left the building and was promptly surrounded by a small crowd of men in camel-hair coats. "Dr. Maybrick, just a minute, please," they clamoured. "Look this way, please. About this uranium. . . ."

Reporters! George turned wildly round for escape. But there was none. He told his story, poker-faced.

All but one of the papers carried his story next day. Lucille's paper was strangely silent. The others had tremendous fun at the expense of it, reprinting the photograph of the box of stones with gleeful arrows pointing out that, to get so much pure uranium, a mountain of ore the height of Nelson's Column would be needed.

The newspaper publicity did, however stimulate the survey team to swifter work, and a party of men arrived two days later. George assisted glumly, and when, three days afterwards, the results were announced, he heard them without feeling.

The results were negative. Uranium was certainly present, but in quantities too small for economic extraction.

NEXT morning's papers printed the report, all of them. And Lucille's paper, once so silent, now bellowed angrily with a leading article attacking "tattling scientists."

George smiled grimly over this. It was raining outside, so he stayed in his study, staring out at the grey skies and thinking of his grey future. His lips tightened slightly as he heard Aunt Pru coming into the room again.

"That woman has just telephoned," she said. "That Miss Lucille Lowther. I told her you wouldn't see her. She's here in Bagna and wanted to come right round."

George said nothing, heart thumping. "You wouldn't have seen her?"

George shook his head. Aunt Pru nodded grimly and left the room.

Perhaps an hour later, George heard a small commotion going on below.

Aunt Pru came tramping up the stairs again. "That shameless thing!" she said. "Coming here after what I told her. Do you know, she actually tried to force her way in?"

George would have liked to ask what Lucille had said, but held his peace. But when, not half an hour later, he heard Aunt Pru come muttering up the stairs again, he felt this popping in and out was getting out of hand.

"What is it?" he said.

"That woman's at the back. She actually climbed over the fence."

"Is she in the house?"

"In this house? I'd throw her out. She's sitting out there, at the foot. I've telephoned the police."

"H'm," George said, seeing fresh

newspaper headlines here. "I'll go and talk to her."

"Well, put your mac on. It's raining hard."

George made his way swiftly to the foot of the garden, where a blob of blue obscured the hole. This proved to be Miss Lucille Lowther, sitting under a small blue umbrella in a blue plastic mac on a portable camp stool in the hole.

She looked up. "I came to apologize," she said. "I'm desperately sorry about everything."

"Are you?" George said. "Well, fine. Now perhaps you'll go."

"But—won't you please give me a minute to explain?"

George blustered a bit. Then he said stiffly: "Oh, very well. Carry on."

"Come under the umbrella. You look so silly and wet up there."

"I'm all right here."

Lucille said earnestly: "Please believe me—I wasn't just after a newspaper story. I really do like you. But I am—was—a reporter. I couldn't miss that story. It was second nature."

"Nice nature," George said briefly, but feeling a certain lightening round his heart all the same.

"I threw up my job today, if it's any consolation. So we're both suffering for it. I want to suffer for it with you."

"H'm," George said again, but without bitterness. He clambered down into the hole and took the umbrella to cover them both. "You heard I was suspended?"

"I'm going to make that all right if it's the last thing I do," Lucille said less soulfully. "In fact, I believe I have done already."

"Done?" said George. "Done what? How?"

"Well, I've just been to see your professor to put in a good word for you. I hope you don't mind? And I'm sure everything's all right. The old boy is rather bucked about the way things have turned out. He feels you've had your lesson."

This was great news; and, on top of the fact that Lucille seemed genuinely to care for him it produced such an effervescence of spirit in George that, with his free arm, he clasped her to him and hugged her.

Lucille kissed him.

Girls had kissed George before. He had himself kissed girls before. But never had he known such a kiss as this. In love, as in so many other things, he was the merest of amateurs. But he had time to learn.

The kiss was interrupted by a voice above their heads. "Everything under control now, sir?" asked a helmeted, rain-driven face.

George surfaced dazedly for air.

"Perfectly," he said, and returned to his studies.

THE END

Peacock village

Continued from page 26

brother was carrying the peacock; no one else would touch it, because not only was it a sacred object but it was dead, and to touch anything dead was against the villagers' creed. The bird must have weighed twenty pounds and I wondered whether Vee would make it.

As we plodded along, my fear took a more subtle twist: what would my father do when he heard the story? We were caught with the goods, and no amount of lying was going to get us out of our trouble. Frail with fright, I trudged beside my brother who, clinging sullenly to his prize, had by now no breath left to use in verbal recklessness.

As we approached the house, I saw Father sitting in the front veranda, as he often did at that time of the day. He was dressed in white linen trousers and a white shirt, with a khaki sola topee on his head, and his eyes hidden behind a pair of dark glasses. The sight of those glasses set my heart pounding all over again. They seemed to sum up everything that was inscrutable in his nature.

Would he meet the crowd head-on in our defence, and be massacred with us? I knew that my mother and the rest of the family were spending the afternoon at the club, and so were safe. But what a homecoming for them later, when it was all over and they returned to find us, a bloody pulp, spattered on the veranda steps!

My father didn't move, nor could I detect the slightest evidence of emotion on his part when finally we reached the bottom step of the veranda. My brother, with what sounded like a sob of relief, dropped the dead peacock on the ground and ran up the steps to my father's chair. I raced just behind him. Our noisy approach had brought the servants scurrying out, and they now ranged themselves in a silent and apprehensive row along the veranda wall behind my father.

Meantime, Father made no move but continued to sit with his legs stretched out, his hands clasped behind his head, and those mysterious black discs of eyes fastened, so it seemed to me, on space. It was impossible to guess what he was thinking.

At the sight of him, the villagers fell silent, waiting for their spokesman, the Brahman, to tell the story. He advanced halfway up the steps, made an obeisance to my father, and began to speak with dignity and restrained passion, turning once or twice to his friends for corroboration which he got from any number of excited voices.

"They came, these children of yours, sahib, to our village and asked for water to drink," he said. "They had walked far, and were thirsty. We made them welcome. With my own hands, I poured water for them, and I sent my son, here, to bring fruit for them from my trees."

"We conversed. They complained that they had hunted for miles and had found no game. I sent my son to guide them to a place where they might find partridges, perhaps ducks."

"My son tells me that they asked him about killing peacocks and that he explained that it would be wrong for them to do this thing. Then he bade them goodbye and left them, and very soon afterwards this bird rose from the fields and your son shot it."

The Brahman paused, and an angry mutter eddied through the crowd. I believe that if the muscles of my

WHY? See page 38

BECAUSE, said the Recorder, in order to aid and abet the commission of a crime, the accused person must have done so knowingly. Here the owner was, on the evidence given for the prosecution, too drunk to have known what he was doing.

(This ruling is based on actual cases)

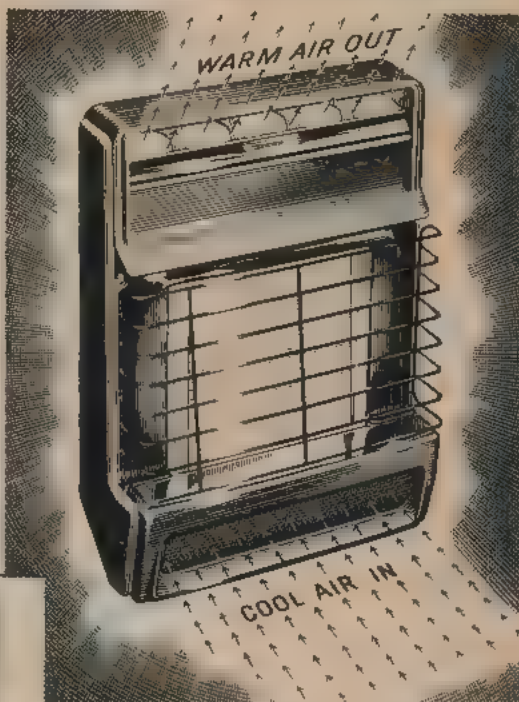
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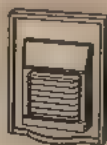


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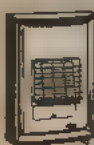
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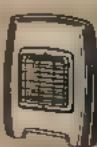
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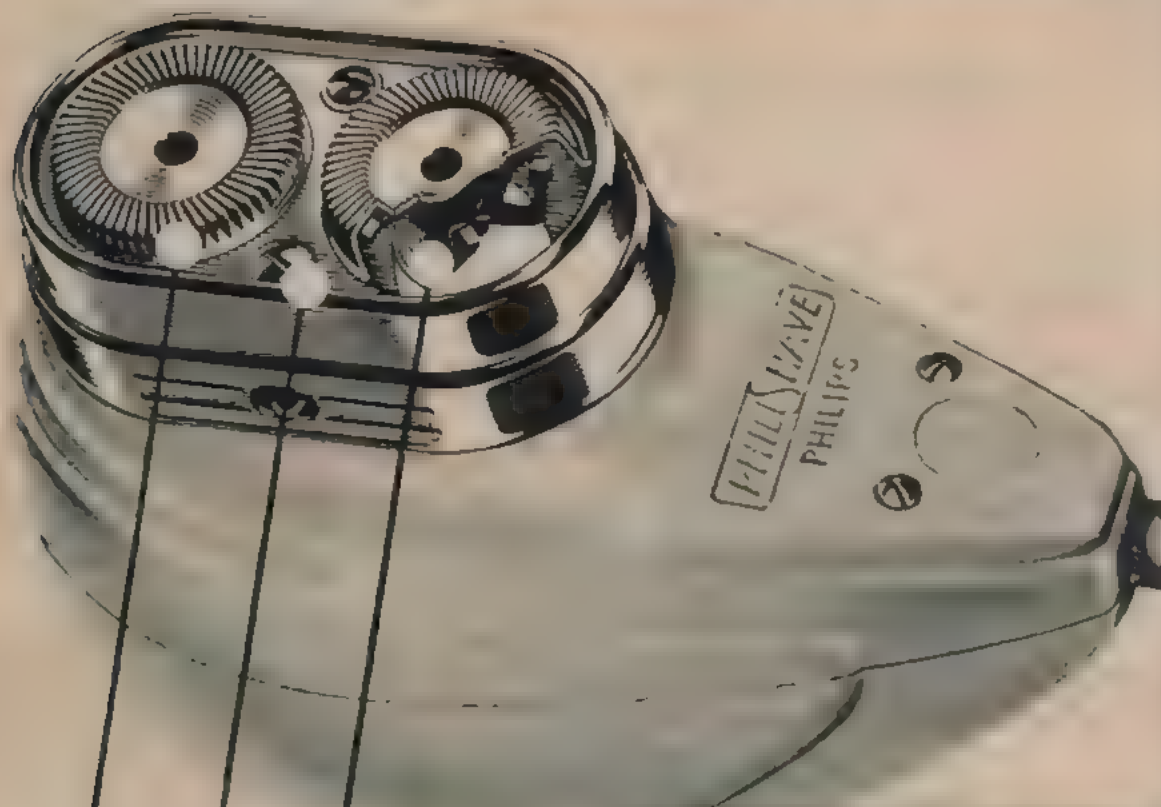


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throat had not been so constricted, I might have been sick.

Then my fear took another turn. These villagers were not so simple-minded as not to understand their rights. If we should escape being massacred, they would have other recourses. They could bring legal action against us, and cause untold worry and expense. I was old enough to have learned that it was out of just such trifling incidents as the shooting of a bird that big issues were made. Suppose these people decided to sue Father for some enormous sum of money, and he, unable to pay, had to leave us and go to jail?

Still without moving, Father seemed to direct his invisible gaze from one face to another in the crowd before him. He asked, finally: "Who saw this thing happen?"

The man who had taken the gun from me stepped forward and laid it at Father's feet. "I did, sahib," he said. "I was drawing water in my field and saw the boy shoot first at a partridge, which he missed. Then this bird rose, as Maharaj here has told you, and I saw the baba raise his gun, like this, and the bird dropped before my eyes."

"Who else saw it happen?" my father asked.

The Brahman's son, urged forward, now declared in a somewhat uncertain voice that he too had seen Vee shoot the peacock. "I had left them and was walking back to my village when I heard a shot and saw the partridge fly away. Thinking there might be another, I stood watching, and the baba shot again, and I saw the peacock fall."

Silence. Then, abruptly, my father directed his next question at me: "Is this true?"

For some reason, the question took me unawares, and I could only stare at him dumbly, not knowing what on earth to say. He repeated the question, and I managed to squeak out that I

PITY—I

There are two sorts of pity: one is a balm and the other a poison. The first is realized by our friends, the last by our enemies.

Charles Sumner

didn't think Vee had meant to kill the peacock.

Father repeated my words to the villagers, speaking in Hindustani, and there was an immediate furious outcry. He turned to my brother. "Vee, is this true?" he asked.

Vee replied, with characteristic bravado, "It was nothing but an old peacock."

This, too, Father repeated to the villagers, and there was another yell of rage. The Brahman pointed a finger at the dead bird, which lay spread below the veranda steps like some beautiful shawl. "The sahib knows—who does not?—that these birds are sacred to us," he said. "The boy knows it, too. There is no excuse, sahib. In justice—and who has greater understanding of justice than yourself?—in justice, there is no excuse."

"You are right," said Father. "There is no excuse." He spoke over his shoulder to Ali, one of the servants, who was standing near him. "Fetch my cane."

Ali hesitated, looking unhappy. "Huzoor—" he began pleadingly.

"Fetch my cane," said Father.

Deep silence settled on all of us. Ali fetched the cane. Father removed his hat and dark glasses and handed them to Ali, taking the cane from him. He did not get up but sat with the cane held in both hands before him.

Without glancing at my brother or me, he again addressed the crowd. "I have tried to bring my children up to respect the feelings of other people," he said. "There is, as you say, no excuse for my son's behaviour."

I stole a look at Vee, who was obviously trying hard not to break down. He looked undersized and

defenceless, with his white face and dirty knees. I began to sob.

Father tested the little cane in his hands, bending it this way and that, as he spoke to the villagers once more. "You have been kind to my children, giving them water to soothe their thirst and fruit to sustain them," he said. "You, Maharaj, sent your own son to show them game. They accepted your hospitality, your courtesy—and how did they repay you? By wantonly destroying this sacred bird under your very eyes."

He paused, and a queer, heavy murmur rose from his listeners. The Brahman said slowly: "It is truly without excuse."

"That being the case," said Father, "I shall now punish my son for what he has done. With my own hands I propose to thrash him, and to go on thrashing him until you give the word for me to stop."

There was another silence, except for my sobs, which were becoming uncontrollable. I could feel Vee trembling beside me.

The Brahman's son spoke suddenly, in a tremulous voice. "Could it have been a mistake, as the Miss Baba says? Could he have shot thinking it was a rabbit, not seeing it until too late?"

The question remained unanswered. My father lifted the cane in his right hand and described a swift feint with it through the air, making it hiss. A deep, concerted sigh came from the villagers. Through my tears I saw their faces, the passion drained from them, a strange anxiety in its place.

"I shall thrash him," Father said icily. "I shall thrash him within an inch of his life."

"No," muttered the Brahman's son, turning his face aside. "No, no, no!"

The Brahman stared at Father. "You understand we do not wish to be unkind—to be harsh," he said. "We have not come here to demand blood, sahib. And the boy is young."

"A child," said a voice from the crowd. "A mere child."

"He is ten years old," Father told them dispassionately. "Old enough to know better." He rose at last, a pale figure, tall, terribly forbidding. "I shall lift the skin from his bones."

The Brahman flung his hands wide in a gesture of appeal. "He is a child, sahib. Let him promise, in our presence, that he will never again kill our peacocks, and we will be satisfied." He glanced at the crowd. "Do you agree, my brothers?"

Their answers came, low-pitched. "We agree." "He is but a child."

"He has had his lesson."

My father gazed at them silently. "You are the judges in this matter," he said, at last. "I shall do exactly as you say."

"Then let him promise, and it is enough," said the Brahman.

Father looked coldly at Vee. "Promise," he ordered. "Promise. Not me—them!"

Vee mumbled his promise, and the crowd turned away—subdued, grave-eyed, and quite different from the menacing mob it had been a short while before.

When they had gone, Father said to the servants: "Take that bird away and bury it." He turned to my brother. "You are let off for shooting the peacock this time," he said. Then, glancing at me, he added: "But you drank well water when you'd been told not to. Hold out your hands, both of you."

It was almost with joy that I held out my hand and received the stinging rebuke of the cane twice across my palm. And not until much later did it occur to me to ask my brother what he thought would have happened, had the villagers insisted on getting their pound of flesh.

Vee shook his head and gave me a sly look. "They wouldn't have, and Father knew they wouldn't," he said.

Maybe Vee was right, maybe he wasn't; neither of us really knew Father well enough to be sure. But if there is one thing I am sure of, it is that I have never been so afraid of human beings as I was that day; nor do I quite believe that I ever will be again.

THE END



Portrait

Continued from page 18

there had never yet been among the Laskers any painter, and though they looked coolly upon such a possibility, the Laskers were, within their limits, a liberal-minded people.

Robert Lasker attached himself to the Beaux Arts School, and spent three happy years there. Towards their end, he approached the principal.

It was, Robert said, his very great pleasure and pride to have had such a time of work; he now sought its crown—to meet, in person, the painter that he, Robert Lasker, considered the master of them all, the great Aristide Maurrot.

The principal looked surprised. "Do you think he will see me?" said Robert Lasker.

"In fact," said the principal, "I consider it most unlikely. Aristide is a very busy man—and when I say 'busy', I mean he paints. He paints all day and every day. He refuses to see either critics, visitors or tourists." Robert modestly but determinedly pressed his point.

"Very well," said the principal, "I will write him a letter. You will get one back—that is to say, not from Aristide, but from Madame. She manages all his correspondence, all his business. Doubtless this letter will say Monsieur will be glad to see you—since I have asked that this might be so—on such and such a Sunday at his home. You will travel there, taking many hours. The probability is, Aristide will be out, or, if he is home, will refuse to see you; or, if he sees you, will not so much as speak."

"I," said Robert, "am prepared to take that chance."

"I, on my part," said the principal, "will then write you the letter."

Everything turned out just as had been predicted. After a short time a letter came from Madame Maurrot saying that if Monsieur Lasker cared to make the long journey to Puisseant, a village some hundred miles from Paris, Monsieur Maurrot would be happy on that account.

On the following Sunday, Robert made the journey.

It was a fine hot day in June. The Maurrot house was, it seemed, three miles from the station and, since no kind of conveyance was available, Robert walked.

The Maurrot property was a rural one—the house itself had, until their tenancy, been a farmhouse. A high hedge surrounded it. No one answered his knock or ring. A circular tour of the house, with some peering through windows, showed no one at home.

Robert strolled on. At the end of the garden he saw a sort of shed.

The door was open. Robert walked in. There the master stood at work: there Madame Maurrot sat, shelling

peas—in the act, suspended, rather, of shelling peas—on the model throne.

Robert drew a breath and coughed. "Restes tranquille!" commanded Monsieur Maurrot.

Robert, therefore, thinking it more conspicuous to withdraw than to stay, as it were froze to the spot. Happily, the spot held in fullest view both model throne and canvas.

Monsieur Maurrot had, at the time, which now approached noon, already lined in, in bold cobalt blue, the main framework of his picture. As Robert watched, he began to apply the paint—a quick streaking background of ochre, umber and Naples yellow; the dark, black-green of Madame Maurrot's dress; the bright white of the bowl in her lap with its Normandy wreathing of purple and crimson, stylised leaves; the brilliant, singing green of the peas she held in her hands; the less singing green of the sea of discarded pods at her small, crossed feet.

The young man hardly drew breath, and he did not move; he watched the canvas first, and then Madame Maurrot who was a woman now moving towards comely middle-age, with fine chestnut hair, a fresh skin and a patient expression.

However, upon canvas Madame Maurrot had charms more than these—perhaps the remembered charms of her once-young days, perhaps only the charms supplied by her husband's genius. For not only did Robert see the master at work; he had seen this little, short-legged, pear-shaped man, as he worked, become a god.

ROBERT hardly knew what he felt. He was suddenly, deeply, violently in love, whether with Madame Maurrot, or with her portrait, he could not tell.

Fortunately, perhaps, shortly before three o'clock there walked into the studio a young girl, the personification of Madame Maurrot's on-canvas or actual youth. Robert's dilemma resolved itself. He was in love with her.

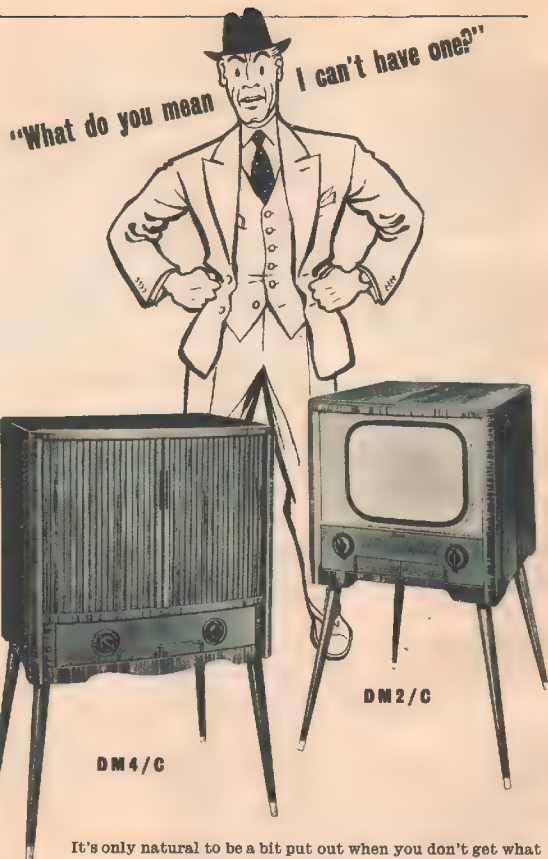
Suzie Maurrot, not yet at that time quite twenty years old, also stood quietly; she, however, did not gaze at her father or mother; she gazed at Robert Lasker.

Finally, when the two young people had gazed at each other for what seemed to both a lifetime, Monsieur Maurrot threw down his brush and moved away. Madame Maurrot, with a sigh, put the bowl of peas on the floor and looked up at Robert.

"You are Monsieur Lasker?" she inquired with great kindness. "We were expecting you. Aristide, this is the young man that I told you about."

Monsieur Maurrot flashed a glance towards Robert, but did not speak to him. "I am hungry—what is for lunch?" he demanded of his wife.

"Perhaps you will eat with us?" Madame Maurrot said to Robert with



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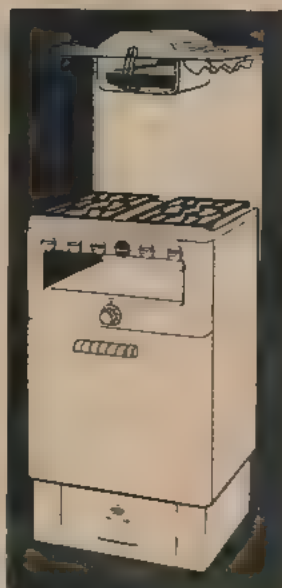
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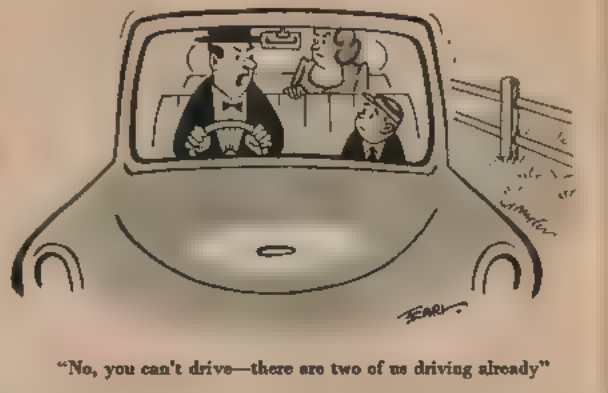
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Suzy, with a start, did as her mother asked her.

Monsieur Maurrot did not speak for the rest of the day. However, as he was leaving, Robert asked Madame Maurrot if he might call again, and Madame Maurrot, doubtless observing the looks that had passed between her daughter and the young American, replied that he might.

So it happened that, on many Sundays after that, Robert Lasker took train for Puisseant.

On the eleventh Sunday, Robert attempted at last to waylay Monsieur Maurrot, with whom at the time he had hardly exchanged a word. Monsieur Maurrot, exhausted after a long day's work, was absently cleaning his brushes at the sink.

"It has been a great honour," said Robert, "to watch you at work."

"Yes!" said Monsieur Maurrot.

"I shall never be able to convey to you my deep feelings of privilege and of reverence," said Robert.

"Just so!" replied Monsieur Maurrot.

"You have taught me a very great deal—what perhaps otherwise it would have taken me a full lifetime to know."

"Truly!" said Monsieur Maurrot.

"I have realized," said Robert, "as I watched you work, that I myself, though I struggle for fifty years, will never achieve the status of a painter."

"It is not—," said Monsieur Maurrot, absently working a brush in a small pool of soap in the palm of his hand, "it is not given to all of us."

"I am, however," said Robert, "a member of a comparatively wealthy American ship-building family. There awaits me at home my place in the family business. It occurs to me that I can perhaps best serve the cause of art by returning home, and acquiring wealth, and becoming, in time, a patron of the arts."

"Such a function in life is not altogether unadmirable," observed Monsieur Maurrot.

"There are, however, other reasons why I wish to acquire security—wealth," pursued Robert, colouring slightly. "Monsieur Maurrot, I do not wish to go home alone."

"That," said Monsieur Maurrot, "is comprehensible."

"It is my wish," said Robert, squaring his lean broad shoulders, "to take with me your daughter Suzy, whom I love. I have the honour, Monsieur, to ask for the hand in marriage of your daughter."

Monsieur Maurrot at this looked up, not at all surprised.

"Is my daughter wishful to go with you?"

"She has given me no to understand."

"Then this would appear to be an excellent idea. I have no objection."

"There is, however, a quite small—er—difficulty on my side," said Robert.

"Oh indeed? And what is that?" asked Monsieur Maurrot.

Robert cleared his throat. "You will, I hope, forgive me for what I am

going to say, Monsieur. I myself care nothing for these things, but my parents, you understand, are somewhat . . . puritanical in outlook. Sometimes secrets can be kept, sometimes—er—not. It might make things difficult for your daughter if she were not received in my home with, as it were, open arms. Suzy leads me to believe that you are not in point of fact married to Madame Maurrot."

That is so," said Monsieur Maurrot, flexing the bristles of a brush against his thumb.

"You will comprehend my predicament," murmured Robert.

"Indeed! But I fancy—would it perhaps ease the situation as far as you are concerned if Madame and I were at once to marry?"

"I more than fancy," cried Robert. "I am sure."

"Well then, I see no difficulty," replied Monsieur Maurrot. "I will speak to Madame herself. We might have a double wedding—for that, as you see, would mean one day less lost to work. . . ."

THAT evening, Monsieur spoke to Madame Maurrot. He explained the situation to her at length, remarking that it was best perhaps that they two, at this late date, should themselves get married. Madame Maurrot, who was at the time stirring a pot au feu for tomorrow's déjeuner, did not at once reply.

"You think it a good idea?" Monsieur Maurrot inquired.

"Very good," Madame Maurrot said. "I must only point out, dear Aristide, that immediately the ceremony is completed I, for my part, shall leave you."

Monsieur Maurrot stood with a dazed expression, understandably unable to believe his ears.

"You will leave me?" he said. "But that is impossible. We have lived together for more than twenty years. You have been my life, you are all my work. I cannot possibly continue without you. You do not know what you say. . . ."

"But indeed I do," Madame Maurrot returned. "For a great many years now, I have stayed with you only to see Suzy safely and happily married. With that task accomplished, I shall, as I say, be gone."

"But it cannot be!" Monsieur Maurrot said. "My dear Clothide, but you know I love you."

"Do you?" said Madame Maurrot equably. "You have never told me so."

"But that goes without saying."

Monsieur Maurrot cried.

"It has gone without saying."

Madame Maurrot rapped out. "And now, Aristide, it is too late."

Monsieur Maurrot, though startled, did not give any great credence to this obvious piece of feminine temperament. Women made many threats they had no intention of carrying out.

"You are, however, agreeable to the wedding plans?" he inquired.

But perfectly," Madame Maurrot replied.

Monsieur Maurrot returned to his

painting and shelved his worries. Shortly after this, Suzy approached him and asked for money. "I shall need a trousseau, Papa," she said, "and a wedding dress. . . ."

"Certainly, certainly, my child, don't bother me now," replied Monsieur Maurrot, who was in the throes of a study of Madame at her ironing board. "When I have done with her, ask your maman, who as you know holds our purse."

Madame Maurrot, iron poised over the board, made no sign that she had heard this conversation. When finally she insisted upon a break (for the iron was a heavy one), Monsieur Maurrot suddenly remarked: "And you, I hope, dear Clothilde, will also buy yourself a most exquisite wedding dress."

"Of a certainty," said Madame. "I shall also, with your permission, buy myself an even more exquisite going-away dress."

Monsieur Maurrot, wily, pretended not to have heard.

On a fine fair day in September, the nuptials of Suzy and Robert, and of Monsieur and Madame were arranged. As far as the world was concerned, it was a wedding so quiet as to appear almost non-existent; as far as the village of Puissant was concerned, it was a considerably noisy one.

Trestle tables were set on the lawn, in between the geometrical flower beds; fine food, cooked by Madame herself, caused these tables to bow; a more than sufficiency of wine filled glass after glass. Many healths were drunk. Aristide himself, having irretrievably lost a day's work, gave himself wholeheartedly to the joys of wine and food.

The curé made a delightful little speech. So did Robert. So did Aristide. Suzy charmingly replied. Madame Maurrot herself, though smiling, preferred to stay silent.

Shortly before three o'clock Suzy retired to abandon her wedding dress and to put on her almost-as-ravishing going-away outfit.

Her mother accompanied her with a happy smile.

The young couple were waved off at the gate in a shower of autumnal flowers. The villagers showed every sign of settling down for the rest of the day and indeed the night, but Monsieur shook them off. They went with docility, having, these twenty odd years, learned his ways. They supposed that he would, of course, wish to get back to work.

When the last of them had gone, and only the devastation of the trestle tables remained as a mark of the merrymaking, Monsieur Maurrot turned to his wife and magnanimously commanded her to leave everything. He and she would settle down to a quiet time at home; he would not even attempt to work today.

Madame Maurrot did not argue. She merely remarked that, as for her, all being done, she would change into her going-away dress and be off.

Up till this very moment, Monsieur Maurrot had not believed in the possibility of her threat being carried out.

"But you cannot go," he cried. "I can neither live nor work without you—that indeed must to you be evident."

"Perfectly," said Madame Maurrot without the bat of an eyelid. "Nevertheless, I go."

Then Monsieur Maurrot, to his own great surprise, found himself flung down on his knees on the grass at her feet. "I beg you to stay, Clothilde," he said. "I'll do anything—"

"Of a certainty, useless," said Madame. "My mind is made up, and at once I go."

Monsieur Maurrot, following uncomfortably on his knees as Madame Maurrot moved away across the lawn, begged her fiercely to tell him why, was there in her life perhaps—could there be—another man?

This was not so, Madame Maurrot answered him amicably. On the contrary, she had had all that she wanted of men, to last her this lifetime and half a dozen more.

"I am tired," Madame Maurrot said, "of starting to shell the peas, and of having to sit, not shelling the

peas, while you paint me shelling the peas. I am sick of it, and of you. What I want is not another man, but a little life; a life of my own, some peace and quiet."

"I beg you!" said Aristide. "Do not do so," said Madame Maurrot, but cheerfully, "for I must refuse you."

Then Madame Maurrot disentangled Monsieur Maurrot's hands from the hem of her dress and, without a backward glance, moved towards the house. After a moment, during which he got stiffly to his feet, Monsieur Maurrot followed her, but too late. The door of their bedroom was locked.

"It is no use, Aristide," Madame Maurrot said from within. "My mind is made up. I go."

At last, demented with incredulity and with worry, Monsieur Maurrot could argue no more.

"You will come and say goodbye to me?" he inquired.

"But of course I will come and say goodbye to you," Madame Maurrot said.

"I shall be in the studio," Monsieur Maurrot said.

"Of course," Madame Maurrot said, "you will be in the studio."

In the studio, Monsieur Maurrot passed what was perhaps the longest, most agonizing half-hour of his life. He took up his palette; he dropped it again. He attempted to set a still-life of three wine bottles and the crumbling remains of his daughter's wedding-cake. This he ground underfoot when

Anno Domini

by HENRY ROLFE

Policemen are so much younger
Than they were in my early days.
You have to admit the majority
Lack the old air of authority
That would settle the Teddy boy
craze.

Electric light bulbs aren't as
bright now
As they were when they first came
out.
A hundred watts isn't sufficient,
They really are most inefficient,
Of that there isn't a doubt.

The roses don't have the same
perfume
As they had fifty years ago.
Coal doesn't have the same heat
in it,
Food doesn't have the same taste
in it,
And people walk quicker, you
know.

he realized that it was his wedding-cake too.

At last Monsieur Maurrot heard the opening of the studio door and knew that his hour was at hand. A dozen specks of love and devotion, of wooing and, indeed, passion shot into his head, and as quickly were gone, as, turning, he saw Madame Maurrot, resplendent in going-away dress, carrying a small new suitcase.

She came into the studio, she put down the suitcase, she started to draw on and button her white kid gloves.

"Clothilde!" cried Monsieur Maurrot. "Clothilde—don't move! Don't, I beg you, move!"

Drawing towards him his easel, he started, in fever, on fire, to paint *La Tendresse*.

Madame Maurrot did not move. Her hands, so like a flight of Picasso doves, stayed arrested in their flight. Tears came to her eyes at last.

I suppose I must try to get him to change his socks tomorrow, she said to herself; I had better make him a simple ragout for lunch—he is bound to have terrible indigestion after all that rich wedding food.

THE END

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And this loaf is not only brown, it's Hovis—the wheatgerm bread. That means somebody's supper will be superb, and so could yours if you speak up for the very best. Fresh salad!

York ham! And don't just say brown, say Hovis!



Hovis
is the
slice of life

so have some every day

Your number's up, Harry

continued from page 15

underworld? Another emu arrested for breaking a fence?"

"I got your letter, thanks, Harry," Sergeant Cassidy said, without a smile. He didn't have too much sense of humour. He was a squarely-built bloke about thirty.

I saw he was glancing at Greta, so I said to her: "Can you give us a minute? This is the police force. Sergeant Cassidy, Miss Greta Fenton. Greta's from England, Bill."

"Pleased to meet you," said the copper politely.

My assistant paused long enough to look round. "How do," she said, and then went straight on with her dust-raising.

Bill bought some razor blades and pushed off.

There were quite a few customers that day—most of Geary Creek, in fact, thought of something they wanted so as to come in and have an early look at her. She was the same with them all, not unfriendly but a bit standoffish; just like a pommy.

Still, when I came back from the pub at midday and we had a sandwich and a cup of tea, she was quite talkative for a few minutes; spoke about the part of London she came from, and how she'd come to Australia because you were supposed to be able to get on here if you worked hard. And she said, too: "It was funny the way the copper came in. My dad was one."

In the pub, of course, they were quite excited about her.

"Best-looking sheila we've had for years," Fred said. "Just fancy being locked up with her all day. Goodbye, Harry."

That sort of joke went on for days. It was natural in a place like Geary Creek, where there aren't many sheilas about. They couldn't believe that we concentrated on work inside the store.

That's how it was, though, to put it mildly. Greta worked like a tornado. She had everything torn apart and put together again. Every day she was at it non-stop, except when there was a customer to attend to. She made me a bit uncomfortable, really. You don't like to discourage anyone, but there's

PITY—2

Pity, if hard pressed, degenerates into contempt.

J. G. Saxe

such a thing as going too hard. Besides, you feel forced to lend a hand now and then.

After a few weeks, though, you could hardly recognize the place. She had it looking so that it might have been a flash shop in Adelaide. People kept making remarks about it, and also business was improving. Even some of my old bad debts began to come in. Greta had a way with her that seemed to make people pay up.

She was good at the actual serving, too. She knew where everything was and kept all the prices in her head. The more she did, the more she liked it, but she always kept herself to herself and that was the way I liked it. My mates wouldn't have believed me, of course, but I had a job to get her to call me Harry, in the Aussie style, instead of Mr. Calder.

She was even perfect as a lodger. Mrs. Tom said she was no trouble, and busy dressmaking all the time. If I went round to break a couple of bottles with Charlie, she'd get up and go to her room and you could hear her sewing or something, while Charlie and Mrs. Tom kept on saying what a nice quiet sheila she was.

To tell the truth, she was getting on my nerves.

Still, the cricket was going well. We had a couple of easy matches so I was able to drop the copper, which meant two good parties at the pub to celebrate our big victories. But he had to be brought back for the next game. He

never complained about being dropped and he was always pleased to play. I'll say it openly: he was a sportsman.

He came in for a chat during that week, of course.

"Well, how's it going?" he asked Greta.

"All right, I suppose," she replied.

"Plenty of sun up here, eh? Not the same as in England."

"You can say that again, fair dinkum," Greta said. She was getting hold of some of our Aussie expressions. They never seemed to sound quite right, but I think she thought they were good for business.

"My older brother was over there in the war, you know."

"Was he?"

"Yes," said the copper, looking a bit discouraged. Greta generally had that effect on people, but they made allowances for it, for everyone knows that Aussies are much more free and easy than pommies.

THAT Sunday we lost badly, mainly because I couldn't get a length. The copper being present, there was no party afterwards. What was more, he'd made a duck and missed a catch off my bowling.

"He'll be in a bad mood next week," I happened to remark to Greta next morning in the store. "He won't be playing. We've got a soft match, so we'll have a party afterwards."

She didn't answer. She was busy making out a monthly report of stamps. Anyhow she wasn't too interested in cricket.

I sent off the invitations, leaving the copper out, and I was surprised when he looked in later in the week. He usually kept away from the store when he wasn't in the team. Luckily I saw him through the window and left Greta to deal with him. I slipped out to the back and started to assemble the grocery order for the shearers that were just starting at one of the stations.

"He mention the team at all?" I asked when he'd gone.

"No, he did not."

"You seemed to have quite a bit to chat about."

"Think so?"

Prickly, that's what she was. If you got within ten miles of a personal remark, she was bristling. It occurred to me that the copper might have his eye on her, and vice versa. He wasn't a married man and they'd suit each other nicely. It couldn't be denied she was nice to look at and he'd been dropping in quite frequently. Besides I suddenly remembered her saying her own dad was a copper.

Yes, it certainly seemed likely; and if so, I told myself, feeling quite relieved, the sooner the better. I could get back to running the store my own way again. . . .

Along came the next Sunday's game, almost the last of the season. I don't want to boast, but honestly I bowled like a demon. We won by an innings and twenty runs.

I admit the opposition was on the weak side—they had to play two small boys and a New Australian from Germany who hadn't seen cricket before. But results are results.

We went right round to the pub as soon as stumps were drawn. All the boys were there, Charlie Tom, Fred, Jim Ryan and everybody. Also there were a couple of station managers, a station owner who's worth a hundred thousand and hasn't ever been to Sydney, and two or three of the shearers that had just arrived.

It's real pleasant to have a friendly party like that in a bush pub after a good day's cricket. We talked about the cricket and wool and what had happened to blokes we'd known, the same as we'd done many times before. Then some more shearers arrived and it turned out they were a different crowd from the others, on their way south. George, behind the counter, looked a little anxious then, for those shearers are tough and the teams don't always love each other.

Before five minutes there was a row starting about the rates of pay one lot had accepted and the other lot had refused. Then the fighting began. A chair hit me in the stomach.

Now I like things to be quiet and



peaceful, but I don't stand for blokes throwing chairs at me. I picked it up and started to sling it back, and Sergeant Cassidy, appearing from behind, took it out of my hands.

"That'll do, Harry," he said. "You're booked and so's everyone else."

He looked around, hoping someone would be defiant, but no one was, not even the shearers. All you could hear then was the sound of his pencil scribbling names. Poor old George was in it worst of all with the danger of his licence—though he'd probably get off with a fine and a warning. For the rest of us it would be a tenner each, that was all.

When the copper had finished we all went outside and split up. I went over to the store and found Greta there. She was busy making out new price tickets. Unpaid overtime on a Sunday—what a girl she was! She hardly looked up, either.

"Guess what!" I exclaimed. "We've all been caught in the pub by Bill Cassidy. Would you credit the old fox? He's never done a thing like that in his life!"

It took her a moment to catch on. Then she said: "Why—was't the pub supposed to be open?"

"Of course not. It's Sunday."

"In England they're open on Sundays—"

"Well, we're not in England," I said sharply.

Then I noticed she was looking a little worried—sort of confused. She was even a bit pink. I don't know why, but I had a sudden suspicion.

I looked straight at her. "Here, Greta," I said, "is this something to do with you?"

She just couldn't hide it. She was as flustered as a chicken. And it suited her, as a matter of fact.

"Harry," she said, "you know when he came in the other day? I remembered your saying there'd be an easy match and a party afterwards—"

"You told him that?"

"I just asked him if he was coming, that's all."

"You asked him!" I was almost shouting. I'm free and easy by nature, but when I'm roused, I'm roused. And I was never so roused in my life as at this moment.

"Well, how was I to know?" Greta said. "Besides, all that drinking and smoking and swearing may be all right

for station hands and cowboys, but it's not for a storekeeper."

That's a woman for you, all over. When she ought to be on her knees, she starts attacking you.

"Listen to me . . ." I began. I was going to tell her to oblige me by catching the train that was due in at eleven o'clock, and that shows the state I was in, because there isn't one on Sunday nights.

Naturally, she wasn't listening.

"You can't behave like that in your position in Geary Creek," she said.

"The last time you had a party in the pub you had a headache all Monday."

Then, instead of going on, she gave a gulp and started sobbing, taking me by surprise again. And before I could say anything she was wiping her eyes with my handkerchief and leaning against me for support. And you know what I was thinking now? You won't believe it, but I was thinking how wonderful it was that she was more interested in me than the copper.

"There's no doubt about you," I said.

"We can have such a beaut business here, Harry," she sobbed. I told you how well she was getting hold of Aussie words.

"I know we can," I said.

"Oh, Harry. . . ."

That's how it happened.

I'm not complaining. I mean, I'm very grateful. I forgot to mention that all this happened a year ago. The way it stands now, I'm a married man and there isn't a better store in the bush than ours.

Everything's going fine—it really is. We're buying a new car soon. Greta sees that there's a bottle of beer in the fridge every day, so I don't need to go over to the pub. I don't see much of my old mate, in fact hardly anything, but as a married man, you know how it is, there's always something needs doing.

Besides, I'm usually busy in the store.

The copper's happy, by the way. He's played every week this season. I've retired from the game myself, of course. As I say, everything's going fine. That's what I keep telling myself when I get into a mood now and then.

I tell myself I don't deserve my good luck. I don't deserve it. I don't deserve it. . . .

THE END



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My boys are beating their pasts

Continued from page 17

school but was achieving great success at sport. "Aren't you going to cane me, sir?" he asked.

"Why should I? You can break up any of your own property that you like—nobody cares."

He didn't do it again. But he would have done had I caned him. He would have attracted the attention which similar outbursts had gained him at home.

We must never appear to be impressed or shaken by any boy's eccentricities. A boy sent to me for being beyond control said dramatically: "I'm so good, sir—I'm going to commit suicide."

I did not even look up. "You go away and do a bit of thinking about it," I told him. "Then you come back next week and tell me exactly how you're going to do it."

He is, of course, still breathing happily.

Most of the lads are high-spirited and we have to draw a line between pranks and delinquency. The line can be very fine when a lad has been named as a delinquent by the Bench. I was going through a dormitory the other morning just before assembly and I noticed that one boy was still in bed. He was a lazy chap who had been given a last warning about sloth, and I hurried across and prodded him.

I was prodding a very skillfully made dummy, and the lad himself was peeping at me from behind the door. "I laughed, of course. But I warned him: 'I did it myself nearly forty years ago. We know all your tricks, you know, and a few you haven't heard about yet.'"

We give any of the boys who want them little plots of land on which to grow flowers and vegetables. They buy the seed from their pocket money and we buy anything they can produce for the school kitchen. There was one lad who was known to be a bit of a spiv, but when he got his garden plot he really put his back into the work. It was easily the best garden in the school, and when we saw him helping other boys and bringing their gardens up to the level of his own we thought that we had found something which absorbed him so much that he was

prepared to work really hard at it. Then we found that he had sold his prospering plot to another boy for seven shillings and sixpence, bought another derelict plot for ninepence and worked it up until he could sell it for six shillings. He was gradually buying and selling his way along the whole row of garden plots. I stopped him, but secretly I admired his business sense.

Boys are allowed twenty-four days' leave a year if the home is suitable, and I try to send them home if I can. A home poor in material things may well be better for the boy than the most comfortable lodgings.

Many boys bring their wives and families back later. Recently one phoned me and said: "I want to show the school to my wife, but she doesn't know I was at an approved school. What can I do?"

"Bring her here," I said. "We'll fix it."

She came—and nobody mentioned that we were an approved school. As she left, she said: "My husband was very lucky to go to such a lovely school, wasn't he?" The husband smiled and winked at me.

Many boys who come to us are round shouldered, pale and weedy. Regular sleep, regular meals and sport give them health and more confidence in themselves. When a boy does well at cricket our job is half done, for the other boys respect him and he begins to respect himself.

I remember particularly an intelligent lad who was sent to us for stealing model aero engines. He would not mix with the other boys, but spent all his spare time playing with aircraft models and reading about aircraft. The other boys despised him as a crank and he was bad-tempered and moody.

When the sports came, he said he would not enter. But we told him: "Come on, Bill—run. Don't be the odd man out. It doesn't matter if you finish last." He trained, ran, and won the Victor Ludorum prize. The other boys had a new respect for him and he had a new pride.

He worked hard and was eventually accepted as a trainee R.A.F. apprentice, having passed his examinations high on the national list.

Soon he was writing to me: "I'm getting along well with everyone. I've taken your advice—I'm not being the odd man out."

And that, perhaps, summed up our job.

THE END

Harry Weetman tees up with dynamite

Continued from page 27

him. "After I had played a couple of rounds it seemed that he was the one who needed tuition, not I," she says. Three months later, when they were engaged, Freda started guiding his game. "She used to sit watching while I practised for three or four hours at a time," says Weetman.

Since they married in April, 1952, Weetman has won every major tournament in Britain apart from the Open championship, and has become director of a sports equipment manufacturing firm. Recently he was appointed golf professional at Selsdon Park, a rich country club in Surrey, where he plans to have the course put on the championship rota. "I couldn't have done all this without Freda," he says.

In the winter of 1956, Freda decided that Weetman was not fit enough. She bought two track-suits, one for him and one for her, and on many evenings during the next six weeks went on five-mile jogs with him on the roads near their home.

At the time of their marriage, Weetman was being sponsored by a Scottish golf equipment manufacturer, who was keen to produce clubs which Weetman had designed, particularly a revolutionary style of putter. Weetman was prepared to do a deal, but Freda Weetman stopped him. Three years later he broke with the Scottish firm and became director of a small London business, which, using his name, has since trebled its output.

"I don't mind Harry being his usual kind, soft-hearted self outside work," says Freda Weetman. "But golf is a business, and in business you have to be hard. To be successful, you need his ability and my ambition."

Weetman's power golf is the principal reason for his tournament successes. "His drive is consistently closer to the green than anyone else's, which often leaves him with the chip and putt, at which he excels," says an opponent. On the other hand, some experts point out that his long hitting

can cause his downfall. "A Weetman drive which goes astray puts him deeper in trouble than a shot of average power," says Max Faulkner.

But according to another fellow-professional, it is a temperamental weakness which has so far prevented Weetman joining the very highest class of tournament players. Significantly, he has never won the British Open, this country's toughest test of golf.

Now, with the new thoughtfulness which he is applying to his game, he is seeking top-class foreign opposition to strengthen his mental approach. Last winter he and his wife spent three months on the American tournament circuit and covered their expenses. "But the money didn't count," he says. "I looked on the trip as an education. When I came back, the British professionals seemed less formidable." He celebrated his return by winning the Killermont tournament, and a fortnight later the West of England championship.

Weetman was born in a cottage overlooking Oswestry golf course, Shropshire. His mother says: "He was always strong, and from the age of ten he was never in any doubt that he was going to be a professional golfer." When Weetman was fourteen he went as assistant to the local professional, Jimmy Walker, who says: "The first shot I ever saw Harry hit went as far as my best drive. He was a natural player."

By the time war interrupted Weetman's career he had won several local tournaments, though he admits: "I couldn't tell from one day to the next whether I was going to win, or whether I was going to knock half a dozen successive drives out of bounds." Just before his demobilization from the army he went to St. Andrews for his first big competition.

On the train, he met Max Faulkner, at that time one of the longest hitters in golf, who offered to play a practice round with him. Weetman, in spite of being out of practice, easily outdrove Faulkner. For the first three holes Faulkner thought that the ball must be bouncing luckily for Weetman. At the fourth hole he admitted: "I reckon you can hit past anyone in the world."

After an unhappy eighteen months at Stourbridge golf club, Worcestershire, during which he complained that he was not being given enough time to play in tournaments, Weetman gave up golf and spent a winter in Shropshire tree-felling for the Forestry Commission. "I left Stourbridge partly out of pique and partly because I was unhappy with my game," he says. "It was the best thing I could have done. When I swung a golf club the next spring, everything clicked, and I was hitting farther than ever."

He joined Croham Hurst, in South London, as professional, and since then he has had many good wins, including a British record low score for a full-length course: he took only fifty-eight strokes to go round his home course on a winter's day when there was wind, rain and sleet. Big hitting, he has found, has led to a number of occupational illnesses. This year he had to retire from the Daks tournament at Wentworth with lumbago and a strained back, and just before the Open he pulled a muscle in his right arm when he hit a hidden stone so hard that he bent the metal-shafted club.

Another penalty of being a long hitter is the long wait on every tee while the match in front moves out of range. Playing at Croham Hurst in a club tournament recently, Weetman became more and more irritated with two men in front who were moving in slow and easy stages up the fairway.

After one particularly long wait, with the two men three hundred yards away, Weetman took out his driver. He aimed the shot to finish close to them as a reminder to hurry up their game. As one of the men in front bent down to examine the lie of his ball, Weetman's drive came second bounce into the seat of his trousers.

"If I could always be as accurate as that," says Weetman, "I should never lose a tournament." THE END

Advertisement

The Amazing Potentialities of Memory

I LITTLE thought when I arrived at my friend Borg's house that I was about to see something truly extraordinary, and to increase my mental powers tenfold.

He had asked me to come to Stockholm to lecture to the Swedes about Lister and other British scientists. On the evening of my arrival, after the champagne, our conversation turned naturally to the problems of public speaking and to the great labour imposed on us lecturers by the need to be word perfect in our lectures.

Borg then told me that his power of memory would probably amaze me—and I had known him, while we were studying law together in Paris, to have the most deplorable memory!

So he went to the end of the dining room and asked me to write down a hundred three-figure numbers, calling each one out in a clear voice. When I had filled the edge of an old newspaper with figures, Borg repeated them to me in the order in which I had written them down and then in reverse order, that is beginning with the last number. He also allowed me to ask him the relative position of different numbers: for example, which was the 24th, the 72nd, and the 38th, and I noticed that he replied to all my questions at once and without effort, as if the figures which I had written on the paper had been also written in his brain.

I was dumbfounded by such a feat and sought in vain for the trick which enabled him to achieve it. My friend then said: "The thing you have just seen and which seems so remarkable is, in fact, quite simple; everybody has a memory good enough to do the same, but few indeed can use this wonderful faculty."

He then revealed to me how I could achieve a similar feat of memory, and I at once mastered the secret—without mistakes and without effort—as you too will master it tomorrow.

But I did not stop at these amusing experiments. I applied the principles I had learned in my daily work. I could now remember, with unbelievable facility, the lectures I heard and those which I gave myself, the names of people I met—even if it was only once—as well as their addresses, and a thousand other details which were most useful to me. Finally, I discovered after a while that not only had my memory improved, but that I had also acquired greater powers of concentration; a surer judgment—which is by no means surprising since the keenness of our intellect is primarily dependent on the number and variety of the things we remember.

If you would like to share this experience and to possess those mental powers which are still our best chance of success in life, ask G. C. Borg to send you his interesting booklet *The Eternal Laws of Success*—he will send it free to anyone who wants to improve his memory. Here is the address: G. C. Borg, c/o Aubanel Publishers, 14 Lower Baggot St., Dublin, Ireland.

Write now—while copies of this booklet are still available. L. CONWAY.

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Mister A to Z

Continued from page 23

head of the Light Programme—bumped into me in the foyer of Broadcasting House; put a finger to his lips in a highly mysterious manner, and whispered, "11.3." I took this to be my "rating" for the previous week's programme, but I still haven't the slightest idea what it meant. Was it good or bad? Did it mean 11.3 million listeners? Or only eleven, and one other who stuck it for one-third of the programme and then switched off in despair?

When I worked for the B.B.C. in Scotland I produced a show which, because of the sudden illness of the leading lady, was cancelled at the very last moment. It was awarded a "listener research rating" of 7.8 or some such impressive figure. I have taken these assessments with a very large grain of salt ever since. Except, that is, for the A-Z ratings, which I am ready to accept as accurate to the last decimal point. We began, so they say, with an audience of less than five millions and within a few weeks had worked up to well over seven millions—and who am I to doubt the authenticity of such figures?

This one—A-Z—came about in an odd way. Wolf Mankowitz had written some articles for the *Evening Standard* called "The A.B.C. of Show Business," and though not a word of Wolf's material has been used in A-Z, to him must go the credit for having the nerve to sell the A.B.C. to the B.B.C.

There can't have been any great faith in the venture to begin with: I was guaranteed engagements only up to letter "D." But, praise be, the show caught on—and now there are sinister rumours in the canteen at Television Centre of a repeat run right through the alphabet sometime next year.

A GREAT deal of the credit for the success of A-Z should go to the producer, Bryan Sears. Bryan is a bright and bouncing character whom I have never seen either depressed, or wearing the same sweater twice. I've no idea how vast is his collection, but obviously Bill Maynard is a mere novice in the sweater racket by comparison.

The various component parts of each A-Z programme came together only on the day of transmission, so alternate Fridays in Studio One, Riverside, were fairly hectic. Let me try to describe just a small part of the sound and the fury.

Beryl Kaye and the dancers probably arrived at 10 a.m. and went to work with Winnie, the rehearsal pianist. Their own and everyone else's sets are being put up, which means they can't hear Winnie for the hammering—so at eleven they decide to break for coffee.

While they're in the canteen, part of the studio floor is repolished by order of the producer and one of the dancers' rostrums is painted a different colour to suit the lighting. This means that when the dancers come back from their coffee they either skid all over the place or stick, and we have the first tears of the day.

Eric Robinson and the boys have arrived but the band parts haven't: when they do turn up, there's a part missing in the woodwinds. It's a funny thing—there's always a part missing in the woodwinds. Jill Day has arrived, but there's no sign of her dress—promised faithfully for two o'clock. More tears.

I have a sketch with lots of props: the props have been sent by mistake to Lime Grove. So-and-so has laryngitis; so-and-so wants his interview altered so that he can work in a plug for his new film (no dice); so-and-so is on location and can't possibly make the dress rehearsal but hopes to be O.K. for transmission. The closing captions have been printed wrongly. No. 2 camera has gone phut; the monitor screens in the studio (where you "see yourself as others see you") have packed up; Eric Robinson is getting the Third Programme in his headphones instead of the producer's directions; I can't remember a word of the long opening rigmarole; and there are still rumours of possible strike action



if Thingummy handles the lighting console instead of What's-his-name.

From 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. the hammering, sawing, singing, playing, dancing, shouting, sweating and swearing continue—drowned at regular minute intervals by the sergeant-major voice of Robin Nash, Sears's assistant, yelling, "Quiet in the studio, PLEASE! ! ! !"

Through all this Sears himself has been sitting in a large glass case, like a trout in a tank but much more purposeful, with six screens in front of him and his long-suffering secretary, Maggie Stratton, at his side—saying in a quiet but firm voice, "cut to No. 2," "slow fade on 4," and "tell Alan to stop grizzling and get on with it."

By seven—entirely due to Bryan and his team—calm has come out of chaos and we are all having supper in the canteen, reading the evening papers, and trying to forget that in another hour or so we shall be on the air.

I've never been happier with a show than with A-Z. Come to that, I've never been happier. Although my first love is still the theatre, I'm lucky in being able to work in another and exciting branch of show business at a time when the live theatre (especially the sort of light comedy that I write) is having a thin time.

As for enjoying A-Z . . . once that opening speech was over (and it was memorized: no teleprompter or other mechanical device!), it would have been impossible not to. Between two and three hundred stars appeared in the series and with two exceptions, whom I won't name, they were all a joy to meet. I'll try, alphabetically of course, to recall just a few of the things some of them said and did to make it fun to work with them.

A . . . Askey, of course—catching the terrified new boy looking at his watch when we seemed in danger of over-running and saying to me, "What are you worried about? This isn't commercial. This is Old Auntie B.B.C.—and she doesn't care!" And a few seconds later, breaking a rigid B.B.C. rule by giving the correct phone number of his accompanist—"available for Masonics." (By the time the accompanist got home, all sorts of people had rung up his wife.) Or Arthur off-stage, making us laugh with stories—almost always against himself—of his early days in the business.

B . . . Markova, representing ballet, letting the fact out casually and almost unthinkingly that if it had not been for her, the choreography of the great Diaghilev ballets might never have been passed down to the present generation of dancers. . . .

"I was the link, you see. None of the ballets was ever set down in any form, or filmed or anything like that . . . but I had them all in my head."

C . . . well, I kissed Petula Clark. Who wouldn't? She was looking prettier than the average picture; she

was wearing a lovely dress; she was singing a lovely song in a lovely setting. Purely for my own satisfaction I kissed her at the dress rehearsal and she didn't seem to mind in the least.

I said, "Can I do that again on transmission?" and Pat said, "Yes, please"—and I got eighteen letters of protest, including a sizzler from a gentleman in Warrington. "My wife and I," he wrote, "were nauseated by the revolting spectacle of you slobbering over that young, innocent girl." It was only a peck, too.

D . . . Florence Desmond, sitting beside me on a sofa and "before your very eyes" turning into Bette Davis. Quite uncanny, when you're only a few feet away. Most impressionists are content to mimic the voice of their victims; without any make-up or other aid, Dessie's face actually changes into the face of the star she's impersonating.

In Bette Davis's case, the eyes grow to twice their normal size and the pupils become surrounded by a wide margin of white—exactly like Davis's eyes; the position of the cheek-bones seems to alter; the mouth changes to that slightly scornful, tightly-tied knot which is the Davis trade-mark.

E . . . G. H. Elliott, the Original Chocolate Coloured Coon, tip-toeing up to me after the run-through, when I'd

PITY—3

Pity is not natural to men.
Children are always cruel;
savages are always cruel.

Samuel Johnson

introduced him as having been a top-liner for fifty years. G. H. (Elliott, not Harding) is one of the most charming and courteous characters in show business.

"I hope you don't mind me mentioning this," he said nervously. "It's not that I care, but one likes to be accurate. I've topped the bills now for fifty-six years—fifty-seven next month, in fact, when I open in *Thanks For The Memory* at Portsmouth. Thank you so much." And then scurrying off when the make-up girl tried to fix an appointment with him. George Elliott has been wearing the same coon make-up for many more years than fifty-six—nearer seventy, I suppose—and no one has ever seen him put it on. What he uses is his own secret, but whatever it is he must have used an awful lot of it by now.

F for film—and although in A-Z we always preferred to have the stars "live," in some cases it was necessary to film them in advance in order to get them at all. Bob Hope, for instance. He was visiting London for only one

day, and the B.B.C. grabbed him to do an interview spot in the show.

By the time they got in touch with me, Bob was at the studios at Lime Grove and getting worried about his other commitments. It was therefore arranged that someone on the B.B.C. staff would ask him the questions I might have asked, that Bob would film his answers, and that when it came to the actual transmission I would do my best to time the questioning to fit the answers—quite a job, incidentally.

The questions were all fairly straightforward, if the ultimate timing wasn't. Since everybody asks him, for instance, if he is going to make any more "Road" movies with Bing Crosby, Bob had the ready answer: "I'd like to, but I guess now it would have to be something down-hill for the old man. . . ."

I got to Lime Grove, not having contributed a thing to the filming, just as Bob was dashing away. "Alan, you were great!" he said, gripping my hand. "They told me you never let the other guy get a word in: I don't know how these rumours start. You said just the right amount; you never once hogged the camera; you were terrific. I wish all interviewers were as considerate. Thanks a lot—bye!"

G . . . Gingold: Hermione Gingold, who had been leading lady of the three record-breaking revues—*Sweet And Low*, *Sweetest And Lower* and *Sweetest And Lowest*—with which I was associated at the Ambassadors Theatre during and just after the war. I have to explain that Miss Gingold is a superb revue artist; that, like many superb artists, she is inclined to be temperamental; and that I am all for the quiet life.

For the past five years or so she has been in America, and she recorded her contribution to A-Z from California. It was the first time we'd worked together on a show since the last night of *Sweetest And Lowest*, when—with the cheers ringing in our ears at the finish of a five-year run—Hermione ended up in floods of tears, saying to me, "They say you'll never write for me again." And I, on the verge of tears myself, replied, "And the terrible thing is—they're right."

H . . . well, what with the Jack Hylton episode, and having to interview first Gilbert Harding in hospital and then Jack Hawkins in tights, that was quite a letter.

Why Jack Hawkins in tights? This was Jack's own idea: he wanted to show that the life of a film star is a pretty strenuous one and that you have to keep in perfect physical condition for it. It was therefore decreed that I should interview first of all his lower portion clad in tights, while he did his daily suppling-up exercises at the barre; and then his upper portion dressed in fencing kit and helmet.

It was difficult to keep a straight face during the first half of the interview, for (if I may say so without offence) I have never come face to face with a knobblier pair of knees. It was essential to keep a straight and motionless face in the second half, because Jack kept lunging out at me with an épée in a most ferocious manner and if I'd moved an inch I'd have been minus at least an ear.

I . . . the one occasion when I refused to carry out the producer's instructions. "We have a wonderful idea," said Sears at the preliminary meeting to discuss the show. "We have Gloria Nord representing I for Ice Shows: we'll do the interview direct from Wembley and you can chatter away to her while the pair of you skate gracefully round and round. It'll make a nice change."

"I don't skate," I said. "You can learn," said the producer briskly. "You've a whole fortnight—it's perfectly simple."

I went next morning to Brighton Ice Rink, and the one moment I dared let go of the barrier something very peculiar happened to my legs. One ended up pointing in the direction of Hove, and the other at Beachy Head.

I had a short chat on the phone with the producer, and Miss Nord did a *pas seul*.

J was mainly devoted to Jazz, and

landed us in further trouble because the programme was faded out just when a rock 'n' roll session was getting under way. This, I gathered from correspondence received, is a pity, that abandoning a performance of *Hamlet* halfway through. "To be or not to be" is soliloquy.

What's more we didn't have Tommy Steele, and that to the teenagers is the real original sin.

K introduced me to Eartha Kitt, who arrived at the studios like a smouldering tiger, having just had a blazing row with her agent, and dressed in ill-mannered, monosyllabic, and used the royal "we" on the rare occasions when she deigned to speak. "We do not care to answer that question," she said.

We hadn't rehearsed at all, but luckily I asked her something I really wanted to know—why couldn't she hit her during a stage performance in Paris. I think she'd been expecting the usual "and what is your latest recording, Miss Kitt?" type of question; anyway, she stared at me for a

second or two, and then threw her head back and laughed herself silly.

From then on she was wonderful, but I still don't know why Orson bit her. It was because she behaved as she did when we first met, I don't blame him.

I included that superb pianist Maura Lympany, as well as Margaret Lockwood, Evelyn Laye and Frank Lawton, Emile Littler, Vera Lynn, and members of the Lyrain family in a "Lambeth Walk" finale. Miss Lympany had played "Clair de Lune" at her contribution to the programme; she was exquisitely poised in a full-length, flowing gown of oyster satin; she had been carefully lit in a really lovely setting—and she presented a picture of serenity and beauty which was still haunting me at the finale.

"Come on—let's dance," said a voice at my shoulder, and there was Miss Lympany with her skirts hoisted and raring to go. We danced the "Lambeth Walk," perhaps fortuitously, off-mike and out of vision, but

if the performance had been made public the teenagers would have realized that a classical pianist can be "sent" just as much as a skiffle or rock 'n' roll fanatic.

In letter M we had a glamorous girl magician called June Merfin who did a levitation act—and this led to near-disaster for me in letter N. David Nixon had the bright idea of levitating me—of causing me to take off and ascend slowly skywards while we were talking to each other. It may possibly have been noted by viewers that I am no feather-weight. Also, I do not possess what is known as a lead for Heights.

Just before I took off, David Nixon said, "Don't hang round. Be just relax." I'm told that nothing less relaxed has ever appeared on TV, and I will still believe it.

There have been so many more moments to remember in this alphabetical orgy... Joan Hammond's glorious voice in *Opéra*; in *P for Popular Music*, the brooch in the shape

of a spider fastened to Jill Day's shoulder, which—being rather short-sighted—I tried to brush off; in *R*, Ada Reeve reciting a great chunk of Shakespeare which she'd learned seven-eight weeks before in Melbourn Sargeant arriving on the dot—and in *T*, Mike Todd keeping us waiting seven weeks for the *Black and White* film of Valma talking about dancing; Bramley Williams telling a story and Norman Wisdom telling a story and so forth as shown from the Radio Exhibition at Her Majesty's Court, with "X" Certificate Boris Karloff, Yana, and—as the last word in the alphabet—some show business—"a posse of Zulu dancers."

In *The Pictorial Papers*, Mr. Welles says that the alphabet is worth going through so much to learn so little, as the charity boy said when he got to the end of the alphabet, is a matter of taste.

I know, having got to the end of my alphabet, it's been well worth it. And I've learned, not a little, but as awful lot. THE END

The sledge patrol

Continued from page 13

white country reflects all the light there is.

Life in the house was comfortable and companionable, and pleasant, free from most of the restrictions and annoyances of civilisation. The hunters were away most of the time, but Poulsen and Kurt Olsen were more or less tied to the house because they were the only radio operators. They envied the others when they watched them go.

There is something irresistibly exciting in driving a dog sledge out across the sea-ice in the starlight. Perhaps it is partly because the dogs are so excited.

To work in a team is a Greenland dog's delight; the whole aim of its existence; and when it sees its driver beginning to load his sledge it gets as excited as an ordinary dog which knows it is going to be taken for a walk. At Ekimness there were six or seven dogs—not counting the puppies—when all the men were at home, because each of them had a team of eight or ten.

Driving a sledge is hard work. It is seldom that the driver can ride free sledge and do nothing. Usually he sits alongside it with one hand on a raised handlebar, the back of it. He drives his team by four words of command and a twenty-five foot seal-skin whip. The Greenland word for go or to hurry is to "quest" and "ah" just like the bark of a dog. To stop is a more "whining, low-drawn" "ai." "Right" is a high-pitched, quick repeated "iii, ai, iii, iii." Left is "yu, yu."

By that winter the men in the sledge patrol knew as much about the ice and Arctic living as has ever been learned by anyone except an Eskimo, and they kept up their patrol all through the winter. Usually they had a hut. Before the war each hunter had a fairly elaborate hut where he lived. This being but was called a "house" or "hut." But also, scattered through his district, he had a lot of smaller huts where he could spend a single night when he was going round his trap lines.

The seven men on their tremendous winter journeys were physically isolated by hundreds of miles of completely unpopulated mountains; but perhaps their mental isolation was even more complete. They hardly ever heard any news about the war. They never quite forgot that they were there to search for other human beings; but as the winter passed they could not believe that they would ever meet anyone in that beautiful wilderness, or that, if they did, the strangers would not be as friendly as all men had always been in north-east Greenland. But in that they were wrong.

The German trawler *Sachsen* sailed from Kiel in the summer of 1942. The sailing was in the very secret after the direct orders of naval headquarters in Berlin. The ship had nineteen men on board. Her captain was Heinrich Ritter, a reserve lieutenant in the

German navy; and, besides her crew, she carried a doctor, two radio operators and a team of meteorologists.

When Poulsen put an end to the international weather reports, it made a gap, as he expected, in the Germans' forecasts, and the *Sachsen's* mission was to fill the gap.

Ritter was a man of fifty, greying a little, very tall and thin and aquiline. He was born in Austria. But his birthplace was in the part of the Austrian Empire which became Czechoslovakia, and when the Germans invaded Czechoslovakia, his nationality was changed again, through so was his name. This time, he was simply told that he was a German.

Some years before, he had been one of the crew of the Prince of Monaco's car on a cruise to Spitzbergen; and Ritter was yet another man who had fallen in love at first sight with the Arctic. He had seen something there which appealed to him intensely, and he went back to Spitzbergen and lived there for five years as a hunter.

He had been delighted to be given command of the *Sachsen*.

The appointment also saved him from a difficult situation. He had been captain of a naval auxiliary vessel running between the North Sea and the Baltic ports behind the Russian front; but he had suddenly been removed from his command and sent ashore by the Gestapo. No charge had been made and he did not know why he was under suspicion; a good many people knew he was not a Nazi, but he had always done his duty as an officer. Nobody had ever told him what went on behind the scenes, but it seemed to him afterwards that the navy had backed him up, and that they had defied the Gestapo by sending him back to sea. He was sure that which would take him out of harm's

way. His orders left him plenty of discretion, and they were so simple they could be put in one sentence: to establish the meteorological party ashore in north-east Greenland. It was left to him to choose a place. If he could get his ship out of the ice again after the landing, he was to come home; if not, he was to winter there himself. But in the Arctic, he had taken two years' provisions.

In early August, the *Sachsen* reached the edge of the ice, with Spitzbergen far to starboard and Iceland to port, and Ritter turned her westward along it to keep as far as possible out of the way of British ships.

The sight of the ice brought back so many memories to him that he could not bear to keep them to himself; happy memories of the Arctic peace and freedom, and its international friendships.

"It is only in the Arctic," he said to Dr. Weisse, the senior meteorologist, as they stood going across the ice. "That a man can find peace, and real freedom."

The expedition's doctor, whose name was Weisse, and who was standing by, smiled at Ritter's enthusiasm for such a desolate sight, and chafed him.

"The freedom of nothingness!" "Ah no," said Ritter earnestly. "There are men there of many nationalities. In the Arctic they are all friends. There is no enmity."

He turned to a third member of the expedition, a man named Schmidt, who seemed a man with an educated background, and drew him into conversation on friendship among the nations, and asked him to him about it. For Schmidt listened and said very little.

Back in Germany, Ritter had been worried about Schmidt, because he was

a keen Nazi party member. But now, in his own excitement at returning, Ritter's doubts seemed unfounded. He wanted to welcome Schmidt and all the others into the community in the Arctic, and to watch the beginning of their appreciation of it.

"It has been in the Arctic before," he said to them, "has been in the Arctic before. It has been down over the north-east coast of Greenland." Dr. Weisse reminded him, "and not even you, Ritter, have been to Greenland."

Weisse had made this reconnaissance himself. He had been in Foulkefjord from Norway. They used some excellent Danish maps which had been taken from Copenhagen, and on which the meteorological stations were marked. At Ella Island they had seen no sign of life, but at Ekimness a Danish flag had been flying. They knew that somebody was living there. None of them knew whether the coast was populated, or whether the Americans were there.

The *Sachsen* passed Iceland, and then turned north to penetrate the ice. On August 25, Ritter wrote his diary:

"That's the end of the journey," he told the scientists.

"Where exactly is it?" asked Weisse. "It is the southern point of Shannon Island, in seventy-five degrees north. As you see," Ritter wrote his hand on the map, "the land is a mass of the mainland is an unbroken mass of solid ice. We must turn north. It is already late in the year, and there is a risk of getting the *Sachsen* frozen in before I could get you all ashore. And if we were to stick in the drift ice, we would be stranded helplessly southward."

"And then?" asked Senese.

"We should be crushed." So Ritter turned south, determined to land wherever he could find a sheltered anchorage. His first point he approached was Ekimness, where he saw open water close inshore. On the north-east corner of this island Ritter turned the *Sachsen* round. It was free of ice. He turned the *Sachsen's* bow towards it, and steamed slowly ashore.

Shannon Island was not a place which Ritter would have chosen if the ice had not forced him there. For one thing, it was too near Ekimness, the only place on the whole of the coast which he knew was inhabited. It is only thirty miles from Ekimness, next-door neighbour, as distances are reckoned in the Arctic. But in fact it was a very lucky choice. He was protected there by one thing he could not have foreseen: that it was notorious as a bad hunting ground, and so the men of the sledge patrol never went there unless they had to.

The Germans anchored the *Sachsen* near the head of the bay. They covered the ship with a number of sheets to make it look like an iceberg, and began to explore Sabine Island and make plans to defend it.

The island is about six square miles. The mountains round there are not high, but they are steep. The island itself has several flat-topped hills about two



thousand feet high, and Hansa Bay is surrounded by them. There are two huts on the island: one is a very small hunting hut in Hansa Bay itself, and the other an old Danish hunting station on the south end of the island, near a small bay appropriately called Germania Harbour.

Hansa Bay was a good place for military defence. The steep hills protected it from the air, and in summer nobody could approach it except by climbing the mountains or by navigating slowly and carefully among the icebergs along the strait from which it opens. In winter, there were only two ways to get to it, from the north or the south across the open ice. Anyone coming across the ice would be at the mercy of even a single sentry with a machine-gun in a prepared position.

But in any case, there was no question of an armed attack at all so long as nobody knew the Germans were there. Ritter's first line of defence was simply to lie low and avoid being seen, and that was easy.

By October, there was nothing to be seen in Hansa Bay except a slender radio mast, some mounds of snow which had not been there before and, within a small area between the mounds, a network of human tracks. One would have had to be within a few hundred yards to have seen the base at all. But by then it was sending reports three times a day to the German navy.

It is hard to say exactly when trouble began on Sabine Island; but certainly, from its earliest days, this was a much less happy camp than the one at Eskimoness. It was only to be expected that some of the Germans would be bored. That was not a very serious trouble; far deeper was the difference between the characters of Ritter and Schmidt.

Ritter had been mistaken in hoping to enjoy the winter. At first, he went on naively confiding in Schmidt. But Schmidt remained aloof; sometimes, he even seemed hostile. It seemed that he must have thought from the very beginning that the expedition should be commanded by a Nazi party member, not by a naval officer.

One day Schmidt came to Ritter and said abruptly, "There should be a weekly political lecture to the crew."

"Very well. I shall leave the arrangements to you," agreed Ritter, though privately he thought it a ludicrous idea.

He had to attend the lectures, to give the impression of endorsing what they propounded. They were embarrassing occasions.

During the winter Ritter fell into the habit of spending a lot of his time alone in his cabin in the Sachsen, or walking about the sea-ice in the darkness, trying to recapture his old feeling for the Arctic, but he seemed to be out of touch with it.

HE was a deeply religious man, a Catholic by birth and upbringing; and he was introspective, the kind of man who tries to consult his conscience before taking the smallest action. The contrast between the beauty and peace around him and the cruelties and sordidness of war began to lead him towards a terrible dilemma, and towards the belief that his duty as an officer, and his duty to God, were two different things which could never be reconciled.

It was after this, later in the winter, that Ritter first began to be afraid.

He was sitting in his cabin reading a book about the Arctic when some of his men knocked on the door and came in. He realized that they were a Nazi deputation.

When he put his book down, one of them picked it up and looked at the author's name and said: "You know this man is a Jew?" Ritter shrugged his shoulders. He had not known it, but he could not pretend to care: the man had been fond of the Arctic, and had known a lot about it. They took the book away.

As Ritter pondered unhappily over the incident, he was suddenly overcome by a sickening sense of dread. All that time, he had thought he had left the Gestapo behind in Germany; but

A MEAL TO REMEMBER

by Mai Zetterling



AFTER some strenuous months playing in Ibsen's *A Doll's House* about five years ago, I went for a quiet holiday to a small fishing village in France.

One of my actress friends went with me and we were delighted when we heard of a tiny island off the mainland to which it was possible to wade at low tide. There was nothing on the island except a few trees and rocks and it seemed that nobody else ever bothered to visit it.

We spent a day sunbathing there and then decided to take some food the next day for a picnic. We bought steak and vegetables, fruit and wine in the local market and, with knapsacks on our backs, waded across to the island.

It was a lovely day and we felt too lazy to cook until mid-afternoon, and then it took us more than an hour before we got a fire going.

We wanted to cook the steaks in a typically French manner, with a sauce made from red wine and shallots, and, although the fire went out twice, we finally managed it.

However, when we tried to make sauté potatoes the fat caught fire

and the whole lot turned into a blackened mess.

The steaks were delicious, and when we had finished our meal we went down to the beach to go back to the mainland. We were horrified to see a glistening expanse of sea between us and the shore, two miles away. The tide was high and it was too far for us to swim, so we had no choice but to go back to our camp fire, resigned to spending the night on the island. Neither of us fancied trying to wade ashore in the dark.

We were wearing only sunsuits, and the night was quite cold. Sleep was out of the question and by three o'clock in the morning we were so hungry that we ate even the burned remains of our sauté potatoes.

It was the longest night I have ever known and, though I loved my little island, I was very glad indeed to be back on the mainland the next day.

Here is a recipe for steak in red wine

Partly fry the steaks in a little olive oil. Remove the steaks and brown two or three chopped shallots in the same pan with a little more olive oil. (Onions can be used when shallots are unobtainable.) When the shallots

are browned add a small wine glass of red wine and seasoning and reduce slightly. Then put the steaks back in the frying pan with the sauce and finish cooking over a low light until they are tender.

he suddenly suspected he had not. Who was Schmidt? Had the Gestapo planted him there to keep an eye on the commander the navy had appointed?

It was this impression that evidence was being collected against him which frightened Ritter. He was not afraid for himself: he was not afraid of death, or of anything that Schmidt could do to him. But he was afraid for his wife and daughter in Europe: for every German officer knew that if he gave serious offence to the Nazi party, his family might be punished.

Ritter made up his mind after that to be very careful not to offend his Nazis any more.

A week or two later, something happened which proved that he had left it too late to be careful. The doctor, Sennse, came into his cabin.

"Ritter," he said, "I think you ought to know that some of the men are trying to send a telegram to Berlin to say you are not to be trusted."

"Trying to send a telegram?" asked Ritter. The news had shocked him, but he knew that he must be cautious.

"Yes," replied Sennse. "The telegram has not actually been sent. One of the Party members took this telegram, written out, to the radio operator, and told him to send it without telling you. The radio operator did not know what to do, poor chap. So he came to ask my advice. Well, you are in command, and it is my opinion that no action of that kind should be taken without your knowledge. So I have come to tell you about it."

"Thank you, doctor. I appreciate

that very much," said Ritter. But when he was left alone again, more doubts and suspicions were added to the confusion in his mind. He had always liked Dr. Sennse. Yet he did not dare to question him more closely. Of course it might all have happened as he said. But Schmidt must have been at the back of it, and on second thoughts Ritter wondered if Schmidt had really meant the telegram to go.

There did not seem to be much point in actually sending it, when all of them, whatever happened, were imprisoned together for another six months in Hansa Bay. It was hardly

PITY—4

Those who do not complain are never pitied.

Jane Austen

likely that Berlin would have acted on it, without any further inquiries. But on the other hand, if Schmidt had not meant to send it but had somehow planned that it should fall into his hands, the whole thing had a point. For one thing, it was a final warning to Ritter, a convenient way of telling him that the Nazi case against him was complete, that they were ready to act on it if necessary, and therefore that he had better do what he was told.

By February, when the dark time ended and the tops of the northern hills

were pink, and the sun could be seen again from the sea ice outside the bay, and everyone should have been happy to think that the spring was coming, the German camp was confused by rival loyalties and distorted politics.

Nevertheless, for six continuous months, the transmitter in Sabine Island had been sending out daily reports, unknown to the British or Americans, which were guiding German submarines and aircraft in their attacks on the Arctic convoys.

It was about the beginning of March when Poulsen said to Marius Jensen, "You'd better have a look at Sabine Island."

The worst of the winter storms and cold was over, and the daylight was increasing by twenty minutes every day from the darkness of early February to the midnight sun of early May. In March and April conditions are best for sledging. So Poulsen had planned to cover the whole of the coast and patrol all the places which had been inaccessible in the winter.

In those early days of March, all of the seven men, except one, were at home at Eskimoness, and all except Poulsen were ready to start on journeys. The one who was away was a young hunter called Peter Nielsen. He had spent most of the winter alone in the district of Hochstetter Foreland, a hundred miles north of Eskimoness, and at the end of April he had gone even farther north to inspect the coast up there and to hunt for dog food.

Marius Jensen was to go north with the two Eskimos who had wintered at Eskimoness, to take three sledge loads of stores up to Hochstetter Foreland and meet Peter Nielsen there; and it was on this journey, Poulsen suggested, that he should make a detour to Sabine Island.

MARIUS did not want to go to the island. "You know it's a hopeless place for hunting," he said to Poulsen. "And the weather's bad out there. There's nothing but fog at this time of year."

"Do I have to remind you," said Poulsen, "that the object of this patrol is not really hunting? We are supposed to make sure that there are no Germans around."

"Oh, Germans! How should there be Germans on Sabine Island?"

"None of us has been there for nearly a year."

Marius was mildly annoyed. But he knew Poulsen too well to expect him to change his mind. It was only a token protest. On March 8 he started on his journey.

The two Eskimos who went with Marius were called William and Mikael. They were both young men from Scoresby Sound, intelligent and sensible, expert hunters and devout Christians. Like all Eskimos, they were perfectly peaceable, easy-going and friendly. The idea of great nations at war was very difficult indeed for them to grasp. To meet a hostile man was just as unlikely, in their experience, as to meet a friendly bear.

Because of this natural and possibly enviable limitation, and as a matter of policy, Eske Brun had only allowed the Eskimos to be enrolled in the sledge patrol as assistants, to drive sledges and hunt and lay depots of food. If anyone ever seriously thought about fighting, it was generally understood that the Eskimos would be kept out of it.

On their first day out of Eskimoness, Marius, William and Mikael made their way along the south side of Clavering Island and round its south-east corner, to an old hunting station called Sandodden.

They spent the night there and the next day started the trek along the south-east coast of the foreland.

The Greenland air in early spring is perfectly dry and clear, and visibility is so tremendous that a visitor from a dirtier, damper climate is given a totally false impression of size and distance. Normally, one can see at least 120 miles.

So it was nothing unusual that Marius and his companions could see Sabine Island right in front of them two days before they got there. All through the first of those two days the

view in front of the sledges, beyond the fan of dogs, changed very little. The cliffs tapered in perspective to the far distance and there, perfectly clear but in miniature, were the flat-topped hills of the island. Behind them, and out of sight, was Hansa Bay. To Marius Jensen's knowledge, no human being had set eyes on this scene since August the year before.

For the third night, Marius decided to stay in the hunting station at Germania Harbour, on the south side of Sabine Island. They approached it across the sound which separates the island from the mainland, after a very hard day's driving. Both men and dogs were tired.

From right across the sound, five miles away, they could see the black speck of the hut at the foot of the Sabine hills. As they crossed, Mikael went off to the right to look at a skerry called Walrus Island which lies in the mouth of the sound. The dogs had been going slowly, and needed some urging.

ABOUT halfway across, Marius's dogs A pricked up their ears and lifted their drooping tails. Something had roused them. Their pace began to quicken. Marius thought: a bear!

He could not see anything, so he called his dogs to a halt and got out the field-glasses which he carried in a bag hung on the uprights of his sledge. He swept the horizon, searching for the slightly yellow speck which he hoped to see. But all he noticed was that Mikael, away to the right, had halted and was examining the ice.

His dogs were eager to move again, so he let them go, and they started to carry him straight on towards the distant hut. Marius was puzzled. The dogs were behaving just as they would have behaved if the hut had been lived in; but if Marius could be certain of anything, he was certain that nobody had lived in the hut for nearly a year. He thought of a bear scavenging behind the hut out of sight.

Mikael had started his sledge again and was coming back towards him, so Marius stopped to wait and picked up his glasses again and focused them on the hut, and then he saw the quite incredible thing: in the still clear air, a small wisp of smoke from the chimney.

Marius stood there amazed. It was years since he had seen a track in the snow or a sign of life in a hut without knowing at once who had made it. Then the obvious explanation came into his head. There was only one man to the northward, and that was Peter Nielsen.

"It must be Peter," he said out loud to himself.

But then Mikael came dashing up, shouting, "There are footsteps, human footsteps."

"Peter Nielsen," said Marius.

"No," said Mikael, coming to a halt. "These are footprints of boots—boots with heels."

Nobody Marius knew wore boots with heels, except ski boots, and nobody walked about in ski boots. Then William, the other Eskimo, saw something.

"There!" he shouted. "There behind the hut!"

Marius looked, and saw two moving specks—two men, running; and they were not running towards him, they were running away. He stood still on the ice and watched them through his glasses.

They ran to the hills at the back of the hut and began to climb them. They disappeared over a col towards the middle of the island.

The two Eskimos were staring, dumbfounded, at this fantastic performance. Nobody in Greenland ever goes into the mountains unless he is following a musk ox.

At the end of a hard day's driving in Greenland, if one sees a hut with smoke from its chimney, one drives thankfully up to it, giving a shout from some distance away so that the person inside the hut will put the kettle on. So, after they had got over their first surprise, Marius and the Eskimos drove up to the hut at Germania Harbour, and stopped their



dogs on the shore below it, and walked to the door and went in.

There was nobody there. It was nice and warm inside. The stove was still alight, and there were two half-empty mugs of coffee standing on the table.

Lying on one of the bunks, there were two daggers, and there was a jacket of an unfamiliar greenish colour hanging on a hook on the door. Marius looked at it, and on the breast of it he saw a swastika.

Marius tried hard to explain to William and Mikael that the swastika was the sign of the enemy.

"The two men that we saw leaving the hut," he explained, "must have been Germans. This is their sign. We have been told to look for a German landing, and we have found one. They are the enemy."

"But why did they run away?" asked William.

Marius sighed. It was clear that the Eskimos did not really understand what he was talking about.

All three of them poked about inside the hut and looked at the tracks outside it, and gradually Marius began to put two and two together.

He could only find two sets of

harness the dogs," he said to his Eskimos.

"What—now?" they protested. "Not tonight?"

"We are tired," said Mikael, "and so are the dogs."

"So am I," said Marius, "but we must get home to tell Poulsen as quickly as possible what we have seen. Besides, the men we saw are enemies, and they may come back."

"Ah well, very good," agreed William at last; though it was clear to Marius that neither of the Eskimos could see any great harm even if the men did come back.

But after a while they stirred up their unwilling teams and started to drive slowly back across the sound. It did not occur to any of them to take the swastika jacket or the daggers.

Even at that stage, the things that really mattered to Marius were the things that always matter in the Arctic: the state of the ice and the weather, and the welfare of the dogs. It was getting dark by then, and ahead of them was all the difficult ice they had crossed in the morning. Eskimoneess was about sixty miles away. The dogs had to be rested somewhere, and the sooner the better.

The first hunting hut on the way home was straight across the sound, on the point of the mainland which faces Germania Harbour. It is called Cape Wynn; and there, Marius, William and Mikael decided to spend the night. None of them really had any idea that the information they possessed was about as dangerous to live with as a time bomb.

That night at Cape Wynn, Marius at last had something of interest to put in his log book, and after supper he settled down laboriously with a pencil.

It was midnight when the dogs began to howl. . . .

When the two Germans who had been surprised in the hunting station at Germania Harbour came breathlessly in from the outpost to their headquarters, Ritter was in bed with a temperature; but the news which they blurted out soon brought him to his feet.

The story they told was so stupid from a military point of view that it was almost funny, but its possible implications were serious enough.

"You were in the hunting hut when you saw these three sledges approaching?" asked Ritter. "Then why did you not stay there. You could easily have shot the sledge drivers as they approached, or ambushed them and taken them prisoner."

The two Germans shuffled uneasily. At last one of them said, "We ran

away and came back to base because we did not want to shoot the men."

He waited. It was an explanation which perhaps had never before been offered to a German officer. But Ritter understood. Something of the Arctic spirit of peace and friendliness had got into these two men.

Ritter wasted no time on remonstrations. "The main thing is: were you seen?" he asked the men.

They hesitated uneasily again. Then one said: "Yes, we probably were, as we climbed the mountain."

"I think we must have been seen," admitted the other.

Ritter knew that he would have to act quickly and decisively, or his first line of defence would be gone. He guessed that the three sledges had come from Eskimoneess. He took it for granted that Eskimoneess had a radio transmitter. And, therefore, if the three drivers, or even one of them, got back to Eskimoneess, the Greenland Government and the Americans and British would all know where his base was hidden.

It was five miles from the base at Hansa Bay to the hut at Germania Harbour. Five minutes after the two hunters came in, eight Germans set off, in two separate parties, armed with sub-machine guns, rifles and revolvers.

Ritter made his orders explicit. "We are going to get the three sledge drivers and bring them in, preferably alive, but if necessary dead."

One of the parties was led by Ritter, who was still feeling ill, and the other by Dr. Weiss. Schmidt was in Weiss's party.

At Germania Harbour there was no sign of strangers in the hut. Nothing had been touched. The whole thing might have been put down to imagination, except for the fact that down on the shore there were the clear tracks of several sledges.

"All we have to do," said Weiss, "is to follow those tracks."

RITTER, still enfeebled by his illness, R shook his head irritably. "You have never seen a dog sledge, Dr. Weiss. It would be absurd to try to catch up with sledges by following on foot."

"Do you then propose to do nothing?" asked Schmidt, meaningly.

Ritter hesitated. "None of us is equipped to go far," he objected, "especially in the cold of the night. Look here, we are all wearing leather boots instead of fur ones. That is one of the surest ways of getting frostbite."

The two others were looking at him coolly. "If you do not wish to come yourself," said Schmidt, "Dr. Weiss and I can lead a pursuit."

Ritter knew that if anyone went, he ought to go himself, but even the five miles from Hansa Bay had taken a lot out of him and he could not face the idea of going any farther. But he knew better than to argue, especially with Schmidt; so he reluctantly let them go. He stayed at the hut and watched them set off like hounds on a trail, following the tracks across the sound.

They had not gone very far before they had the satisfaction of being proved right: from half-way across the sound they could see a light in the hut at Cape Wynn, where Marius and the Eskimos, in their innocence, had not thought of blacking out the window.

The Germans spread out in a quarter circle and crept very quietly in towards the light. A full moon was shining above the steep hills behind the hut; but in the shadow of the hills it was dark. They stumbled through the shore ice. On the shore the snow squeaked under the leather soles of their boots. They heard dogs growling.

Suddenly the light went out. They all ran forward to converge at the place where the light had been, and the sound of the dogs turned to furious howls and they found themselves among what seemed a milling mass of dogs which leaped at them with bared teeth, snarling.

NEXT WEEK: "If you want war—you shall have it!"

"The Sledge Patrol," by David Howarth, is published by Collins at 15s.

PITY—5

Pity is the deadliest feeling that can be offered to a woman.

Vicki Baum

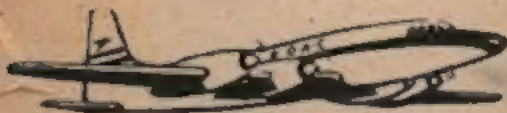
human tracks, and no sledge tracks. There was an uncured bearskin and half a bear's carcass. There were two eiderdown sleeping bags in the hut, the sort one might use in a base camp but not in a tent, and there was very little food or fuel. The equipment, so far as it went, was good, and did not have the makeshift look of having come out of a crashed aircraft. On the other hand, there was no travelling gear at all.

"These men," he said to the Eskimos, "must have been on a short hunting trip, so their base is not far away."

And when Marius came to think of the direction the men had taken in the hills, there was only one place that the base was likely to be: in Hansa Bay.

Once he had come to this conclusion, Marius realized that they could not stay at Germania Harbour. "Better

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FOLLOW HER TO A BIG CASH PRIZE!

"BULLETS" No. 2,105—FIRST PRIZE, £300 (or, if Tournament winner, £1,000 Award as offered): Mrs. G. J. Elborn, 97 St. Leonard Street, Lanark:

Way To Run Britain Like Ruhr—Not "Ruritania"!

(25: R. G. Patterson, "Gwynfa," The Wern, Rhossetmor, Mold: THE CARPET BEFORE US—CONFETTI—THE "PATTERN," Ours.

(10: V. H. Dunningham, 6 Westbury Road, Ipswich, Suffolk: IT'S A STIFF CLIMB, BUT—"EASTERN PASS" STILL OPEN.

OTHER AWARDS: (9: F. H. Garrett, 68 Field Crescent, Harlecott, Shrewsbury: THE MIGHTY DOLLAR—OVERSHADOWS MIGHTY NICE PEOPLE! (8: A. T. A. Frost, 38 Coniston Avenue, Headington, Oxford: THE GRAVE BEFORE US—ONLY? "DIG DEEPER," ATHEIST! (7: W. Whitaker, 65 Conway Road, Treorchy, Glamorgan: ACROSS THE ATLANTIC—MIGHTIEST "FIST"—FRIENDLIEST HAND. (6: R. H. Hardy, 6 Cherry Garden Lane, Folkestone: DIRTY OLD RIVER—BUT OLD BEFORE DIRTY! (5: R. M. Peaty, 245 Gospel Lane, Birmingham: ALARMING—"MUMMY, SING A COMMERCIAL!" (5: E. Vincent, 17 Garnier Street, Fratton, Portsmouth: HAD A WONDERFUL TIME—CHILDREN DRAGGED ME EVERYWHERE! (3: Mrs. E. Wratten, 22 Birkbeck Road, Hutton, Brentwood, Essex: THE MIGHTY DOLLAR—BUYING FEWER HUMBLE Salaams.

1,610 other awards have also been posted. (Tournament winner will be announced in earliest possible issue.)

RULES

1. First Prize for best Bullet received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all Bullets received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. at the rate of 6d. per Bullet. Fee submitted will be taken to cover Bullets in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated Nov. 2), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, Oct. 19, for early news of No. 2,110 result.)

POST ENTRY
Bullets 2,110, "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.99

WAY TO WIN

Here's how to shape a Bullet. First, grasp the broad idea by enjoying the latest winners. Then choose as your starting-point any Example from list below. To it, add TWO, THREE or FOUR words to make the whole into a bright Bullet.

Prosperous Nation
In The Service Of Man
Never Had It So Good
Education's Weapons
Back In Harness
When TV's In Colour
Cure For The Blues
The Sergeant-Major's Going, So
One In A Thousand
Soaring To Stardom

He Played The Game And
Broken Bottles
Blind To The Facts
A Shadowy Figure
Regimental Mascot
Giles Of Today
Old Sour-puss
Straw In The Wind
Hypnotized
With Bowler And Umbrella

Last six Examples are incomplete: if you wish to use one, first complete it with a word of your choice—then make your Bullet as above.

From Britain To..... Money For.....
Bulging With..... Bravo.....
.....Grumbles, But..... Left The.....Behind

EXAMPLE

BULLET

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B.

EX.

B.

EX.

B.

EX.

B.

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An extra £100 Cash Bonus will be shared among cash winners in Contests 2,105/2,110 whose successful efforts were one of five or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

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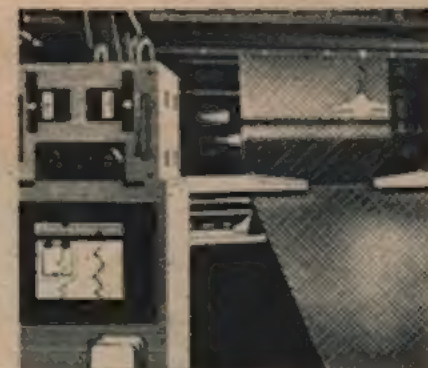


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